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THE WOMAN OF HONOR;

OR,

FALSE FRIENDSHIPS IN SOCIETY.

A BOOK FOR WOMEN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

LOUIS ÉNAULT,

BY MRS. REBECCA L. TUTT.

35

"The Woman of Honor; or, False Friendships in Society," is so well translated from the French, that it reads as though it had been written in English. Avranches, where the story opens, is a town in Normandy. Jeanne Derville, the Woman of Honor, is at this time but nine years old, and goes to the State school of St. Denis, in Paris, after having been left an orphan. Col. Derville, Jeanne's father, had served as an officer for many years in the French army, but died very poor, leaving only a small country house to his child. After leaving St. Denis, with the highest distinctions for merit, she was induced to spend a month with her school-mate, Victorine de Blanchelande, where for a while she was treated with marked cordiality by all except the father, who persecuted her with his attentions from the first. All went smoothly in their little world till a suitor came for Victorine, one who had been promised her hand from infancy—but meeting the girls on equal terms, Count Bois-Robert fell desperately in love with Jeanne, and refused openly to marry Victorine. Disappointment in the family at this event, made them see they had best rid themselves of Jeanne. When she was leaving their home, without a friend or a dollar, she was waylaid by the host, who commenced anew his attack upon her. At this time, Count Bois-Robert met her carriage on the road, and saw as he thought a well-concerted intrigue. He immediately cast her from him to marry Victorine. Jeanne struggled with poverty and hunger for several years, and at last by her own exertions obtained employment as a music-teacher, when she soon became "the rage." After this she had no difficulty or fear of meeting old acquaintances, and took an early opportunity of telling Count Bois-Robert her opinion of him. But "all's well that ends well," and Jeanne marries Marquis de Verteins, to become the happiest of women. This is a capital story, and ought to meet with great success, as it is very seldom one meets with so good a novel.

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"The Woman of Honor; or, False Friendships in Society," translated from the French by Mrs. Rebecca L. Tutt, is a most charming book, elevated in tone, delicate in sentiment, and wise in its teachings; a book which may be read with pleasure in the most refined family circle, and with profit by that large class of young women, who are, in this country, earnestly and practically endeavoring to solve the question of woman's rights and woman's duties.

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David H. Strother.

(Porte Crayon.)

THE WOMAN OF HONOR;

OR,

FALSE FRIENDSHIPS IN SOCIETY.

Dedication.

To Poor Young Women.

THIS book is written expressly for you, and it is to you I dedicate it. To you who often suffer, and who are always working.

All ought to aid you, for you are weak, and life is hard and rough for you. Many snares surround your youth. How few there are who recognise the brotherly interest you ought to inspire! We only notice you as you pass in the flower and brightness of your twenty years, and believe we have done all, when we allow you to see the admiration we experience. I myself, who have vowed to find out this feminine enigma so much more attractive than one has ever imagined, I have sometimes tried to depict the life of women. But usually I have searched for my heroines among the rich and happy, amongst the queens of the world, who have only had the trouble of being born in order to enjoy all the pleasures of life. I have felt myself then carried away by the fiery age, that fatal current.

Later when life has become more composed, I have reflected. I have compared. Existence has appeared under another aspect, and my sympathy has gone entirely to the disinherited, to those for whom each minute is a peril, each hour a battle, each day a trial and verdict.

It is of one of those! One of you, that I have chosen to relate of in my book.

Poor as you—she is, may be more unhappy still; since she was born rich; since she has received an education that they call liberal, doubtless because it freely gives to women the liberty of dying with hunger.

Contrary chances, the malice of things, an adverse destiny, threw her at twenty years in the midst of the hardest works. Nothing is spared her. Neither the sufferings of the soul nor those of the body—neither the despair of deceived love nor the torture of hunger! Yet nothing shakes her courage—nothing abates her energy—nothing daunts her will. All is sorrowful within her; and she would yield a hundred times if she were not of this valiant race which grows greater in the contest. She accepts work as the law even of her life, and it is by work that she triumphs; for she does triumph! She finds, at last, security in fortune and rest in love. All those who may have worked and struggled will triumph like her.

I do not say that they will all reach the brilliancy of rank and the opulence of a millionaire. But opulence and brilliancy have never been indispensable conditions of happiness. One is happy above all things through the noble efforts made to fulfil duty by the consciousness of having done right; and this happiness, which is the only true happiness, God has placed at the door of all and with all; and it suffices to strive for it in order to obtain it.

LOUIS ENAULT.

PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER I.

AVRANCHES is a charming town. The very first view of it captivates the traveller. He desires to stop there; and regrets passing too rapidly. The ancient city, always young, is situated on a promontory commanding the distant sea, and a horizon of vast fields watered by the Sée, a pretty little river, which unrolls to the sun her mirror of smooth water.

Avranches, as so many other towns, has seen fall, under the hand of man, and under the scythe of time, its ancient crown of battlements, its diadem of bells and all its ornaments of the middle ages. Still it has always kept its great masses of foliage thrown out between the coquettish houses, and waving under the roofs as waves a bunch of feathers on the crest of a helmet.

Around the town, along all the roads, rise the most coquettish little houses in the world—little Renaissant castles, Gothic manors, modern chateaux, Italian villas, English cottages, Swiss châlets, mixed with Normandy huts.

If, on leaving the suburbs, you take the road leading to Saint Malo, you will soon find, in an exquisite country, where by nature and by man, all seems arranged just as you would desire to please the eye, a little original edifice, picturesque and fanciful.

It is built of stone and brick, of earth and wood, full of fancies and caprice—an outside staircase, uncomfortable, but very ornamental, surrounds the house, and serves as its only stairway, or rather, open balcony, carved in oak, and on which open the doors and windows of the apartments. A gigantic rose tree, a hundred years old, with its pliant branches, its innumerable flowers, carpets the walls, festoons the staircase, mounts to the top of the balcony, and embroiders the roof with its perfumed garlands. I know nothing more beautiful than its petals of snow, tinted with an imperceptible cloud of flesh color, so pale that it scarcely mars their immaculate whiteness.

Before the house, to which this enormous shrub has given the name of the Rosery, a thick impervious turf, which rises from the foot that has trampled on it, unrolls its best carpet of green velvet.

A clear rivulet with a silver foam runs between two banks bordered with mosses, cresses, and these "myosotes," friends of the water, which timidly open themselves as the blue eyes of a German. It crosses the grass-plat, drawing there some ingenious lines, maintaining its vigorous freshness, and feeds a basin, whose borders are filled with the shell-fish that the tide of the sea has left in withdrawing from the coast. All this makes one involuntarily dream of those grottoes of stones, where the nymphs and goddesses came in olden times, to bathe their naked feet.

At the top of the staircase, is a small pepper-box shaped turret with a turned spire, extending as high as the vine-covered roof, whilst on the other end, an octagonal tower terminates in a platform, whose stone balustrade rests in the midst of sweet-scented clematis, its head dressed in the green of an old ivy.

The roof, which holds three chimneys, lacks a little in height. One does not have to search long in order to see all

the bluish slate, nor all these varnished tiles, which trace on the house the brilliant arches.

In the neighboring fields, one is struck by the thatched huts which content the peasant for his home, and which by the alternatives of rain and of sunshine, of darkness and of light, have given them by the variable seasons, shades of the richest and most incomparable variety of browns. As nothing is immutable in the eternal changes of nature, as nothing dies for ever in this everlasting fruitfulness, new vegetation shoots forth on this vegetation cut short. A thousand little plants spring up and blossom on this dry straw and make a bouquet of each house.

On the top, in the place that in other houses is occupied by the carved brass tile-ridge, the plumet, fashioned like an ear of corn, and the turning weathercocks, is quilted in a light bed of soil and of clay, the dark roots of these beautiful ires, with their brilliant petals, which bathe in the freshness of the air, drink the pure dew, play in the sunshine, and allow themselves to float in the wind, a trail of variegated light.

It is spring time. Perfumed scents breathe from the bosom of the earth. The bushes sing. The hedges blossom. The wild broom with its golden flower glows in the midst of the thorn. The large rocks are clothed with a mantle of saxifrages, of heath, of roses, and of green mosses. On the sand, too often forlorn and desolate, the waves murmur as far as the horizon, so sweetly that one might imagine they are singing.

The Mont Saint Michel with its elegant and stern profile, outlining itself on a double blue, the ocean below, the heavens above, adds the greatest charm to the landscape.

No person could stop before the white barrier which separates the Rosery from the road, without murmuring to himself and perhaps with a sigh of envy, "This must be the abode of happiness!"

Alas! does one ever know where happiness dwells?

CHAPTER II.

WHILST we admire the sweet and smiling appearance of the Rosery; whilst in our minds we select this lovely spot to locate there the peaceable scenes of happiness, the Rosery is the theatre of one of those dark and hidden dramas which unrolls itself each day! Alas! in our discreet mansions, and the bitter reality of which far outstrips the darkest inventions of the dramatist or novelist.

For, even at this moment, the master of the Rosery is dying!

He dies on this adorable morning of May. Around him all seems reborn—everything invites him to live. He dies when insensible nature, clothing herself with all her graces, makes herself more beautiful than ever for those very eyes which will never see her more.

In the best room, transformed into an impromptu chapel, we see near the bed, on a table covered with white linen, to resemble an altar, several silver candlesticks, where burn the little tapers placed around the censers.

The dying man lies stretched on his death-bed. On his left a young nun, as pale as a ghost, prays in a low tone; on his right a gray-haired priest, surpliced and with stole, holds with one hand the hand of the patient, and with the other points him to heaven. Near the window a chorister, with the indifference of his age, looks at the passing clouds. He who dies thus is not an old man—one would scarcely set him at fifty years. His noble countenance, on which death has already cast his shadow, shows all the characteristics of the particular kind of beauty called military beauty. A large forehead, the imperious frown of the commander; large, straight features, breathing frankness and energy with firmness—firmness in life and in the presence of death. There is something loyal in the whole countenance. On the lips is goodness, and in the eyes, now nearly extinguished, a pathetic look by which one feels involuntarily moved to sadness.

At the head of the bed you see a sword, with the handle and guard made of gold; an epaulet on either side; and underneath, the cross, on a ribbon, of the Commander of the Legion of Honor.

The priest offers to the dying man the consolations of Faith and the encouragement of Hope—those two divine virtues which aid us in dying. He spoke of the life without end, succeeding this dream

of a day—which is our sad lot on earth. And he endeavored to soothe the agony of death by talking of the goodness of God.

"My dear curé," said the dying man, with a feeble but distinct voice, "you know perfectly that my faith is yours. All you tell me I myself believe; and then, besides, we have so often looked each other in the face—death and I—that we can no longer fear each other; and I am ready to report to the roll-call that they beat on high. And lo, my dear curé, I believe that call will come before seven o'clock to-day; but I have expected this for six months."

"A good death is the reward of a good life," said the priest, with consoling kindness.

"But my daughter; my poor little Jeanne! What will become of her? Oh, my God! when I am gone who will take care of her? Who will love her? No one! Behold! this is what makes me desperate and frightens me!"

"God is great! He is as good as he is powerful. He gives food to the little birds—how can you think he will abandon a creature made in his own image?"

"Alas! he has so *many* children!" said the dying man with a pale smile. "besides, man so often frustrates his intentions. My dear curé, pardon me for speaking thus to you, but do you see, I should be less uneasy if, in place of being a child—a daughter of my heart and of my blood—Jeanne was one of those swallows who hang their nest in my window; or one of those little birds who sing in the honeysuckle."

"Do not speak so, I implore!"

"What do you expect? Since I feel I am dying, these ideas engross and agitate me more than I can tell. Sometimes they assume the form of remorse."

"Of remorse! You talk of remorse, colonel?"

"Yes; I feel myself guilty towards my daughter, whom I love so much. I have, in part, squandered her little patrimony, and I have fatally entangled, in the desire to increase it, the little inheritance left by her mother."

The curé remained a moment without replying, and a tear ran down the blanched cheek of the colonel.

"Do not distress yourself thus, my honored friend," at last replied the good priest. "Will not the Rosery pass entirely to your daughter?"

"Alas! the Rosery is mortgaged for three-quarters of its value. It would have been much better if I had sold it long ago, but I had not the courage. What could I do?—One is but human! It was here I knew Jeanne's mother, my dear Elise, she who made the happiness of my life. To lose the Rosery was to lose her a second time. I could not do it. This weakness—which she may some day excuse—compromised, alas! the interest of my daughter. When my debts are settled, she will barely have, for her whole possessions, this house, where she was born."

"But your friends?"

"The dead have no friends."

"Your family?"

"I have no family. My father was a soldier—like myself an officer of fortune—namely, without fortune. He has left me his name without stain, his reputation for honor, and his sword."

The priest sat down.

"Are there no relations on your wife's side?"

"My wife was also an orphan. She inherited her little property from an uncle—her only relative. My daughter will remain alone in this vast world."

"And I! ungrateful one! You count me as nothing."

"You, my dear curé! You are like the good God—very good—but you belong to all the world. You seem as if you did not belong to any one."

"Ah! colonel, you have such a way of saying those things!"

"I tell things as they are. Don't you see? You have your poor, or rather your poor have you. You cannot take a new charge—a charge as heavy as that of an orphan."

The curé felt the colonel was right, and did not insist any longer.

"When I am dead," continued the colonel,—"to-morrow, or sooner, perhaps,—you will take the child to the village, to the house of Madame La Marquise de Boutaric, who honors me with some regard. Give her this letter, and place Jeanne in her hands. All is provided for and arranged in these," continued he, with a still firm voice, handing the priest a large package sealed with black wax, "and I know the mar-

quise too well not to be certain she will carry out my wishes. Tell her, however, that my thoughts of her, and confidence in her, have aided me to die."

"I will do all you desire. You cannot doubt that."

"Ah! I do not doubt; but my eyes tremble. It is the commencement of the end. The end will soon come." He turned himself towards the nun who was still praying. "My sister," said he, softly, "will you be kind enough to call the child?"

The sister went out.

The colonel, when alone with the priest, showed him, by a glance, the portrait of a beautiful lady hanging by a child's. The curé handed it to him. It was a charming head, with an expression of refined though delicate sensibility. The oval outline of the face perhaps rather long; an intellectual brow, surrounded with light chestnut-colored hair hanging in soft waves on the cheeks; eyes of a light orange brown, shining in a liquid light.

"To see her again! To see her again!" said the colonel, with an accent of deep tenderness, and a look which seemed to rekindle the last spark—a last lightning flash of passion.

The sister now returned with the child.

"Jeanne, is it thou? Where art thou?"

"Here I am, father—here I am," replied a young, pure, fresh and thrilling voice, whose tones sounded like silver.

At the same time, a large child (for ten years of age) whose features and expression recalled so faithfully the image of her mother, ran to the bed, and seized in her hands one of the hands already cold, and covered it with her tears, and re-warmed it with her kisses.

"You love me well, then, Jeanne?"

"Do I love thee, father? I love thee as I love the good God!" replied the child, pressing her lips still lighter on the hand of the colonel.

"And I must leave her?" murmured the unhappy father, casting on the priest a sorrowful look.

"The separations of Christians are never eternal."

"Are they less painful for that?"

"Yes for Faith softens them and Hope consoles them!"

The colonel raised himself on his elbow, and leaned towards his child; caressing with his other hand her long floating curls.

"Dear little one," said he, speaking very low, "I must leave you."

"Leave me, father! thou dost not then love me. Why wilt thou leave? Why dost thou wish to leave me?"

"I do not wish it, my poor child! and if I go, it is because I cannot help myself."

"And where, then, dost thou go, father?"

The colonel hesitated, not knowing how to reply.

"I am going to see thy mother," he said at last. "Thy little mother, who loves thee so much. Thou must remember her."

"Ah! thou art then going to mamma, whom the men in black have carried away, and who never came back again. Thou wilt do as she has done. Thou wilt return no more!"

"Fear nothing, my child, only be good and gentle, obeying the mistresses who will have the charge of raising and instructing thee, and we will meet again. I promise you that we will meet again."

"Yes," replied Jeanne, the big tears running silently down her cheeks. "Yes, mamma said the same thing, and I have never seen her since. Oh father! father! please do not leave me!" and her little arms clung to the dying man, and tried to embrace him; as if to prevent him from leaving.

The colonel made no reply: but big drops of cold perspiration formed at the roots of his hair and moistened his forehead. Nervous sighs shook his breast, agitated his arms and contorted his face; whilst his fingers fidgeted without ceasing, trying by a movement entirely mechanical, to pull up the bed clothes and curtains of his bed.

A familiar witness of those dark movements which accompany the last act of the human drama, the curé recognised with too much certainty, the foreshadowing of death, and to spare the child this frightful spectacle which remembrance in later years would darken her thoughts, he motioned silently to the sister to lead her away.

Trembling, overpowered by her emotions, Jeanne, alas! had neither the will nor strength to resist. The sister put

her arms round the child's waist, the little hands unclasped, and she suffered herself to be carried away.

The colonel, who had closed his eyes, feeling his child no more near him, understood too well the details of this sad scene.

"It is well;" said he to the curé; "you are right! I should frighten her; she must see me no more."

"No—No more in this world!"

The colonel made no reply, and fell apparently into a stupor. From time to time he raised himself with a sudden violence, his breathing became hard and painful. The priest knelt, and recited in a low tone those beautiful prayers for the dying, full of pity, full of tears, which the church sends to their aid—to aid the soul of the Christian in leaving this world. Suffocation, want of breath, and vertigo, soon overcame the unhappy mortal. He spoke but incoherent words, without connection, among which one could yet distinguish the names of his wife and daughter, Elise and Jeanne. His two loves! Then some short lamentations, followed by long faintness and prostrations, so entire that one would believe he was already gone.

After coming out of one of these death-like swoons, "My cross!" he said, holding out his arms, as if to seize something.

The priest tried to unfasten his cross of commander from the head of the bed.

"No! not that!" cried he; "my cross of a Chevalier!"

The curé brought from the mantelpiece a cross of artillery, which hung by a faded, rumpled, discolored ribbon. The cross seemed to have been broken by sabre blows on the breast of the soldier, and in more than one place little pieces of the enamel were gone. After dusting it, the priest placed it in the colonel's hand; but the slight weight seemed too heavy; for he let it fall. It is always our first success that causes pleasure.

"I had just left school a second lieutenant when the general fastened this to my coat. Oh, that happy day! It must, to-morrow, be fastened on my white clothes!"

His eyes closed, this time for ever. The priest held a looking-glass to his mouth, but no breath tarnished its pure surface. He placed his hand on the heart, but no movement was perceptible.

Already, the violet paleness of death spread over the forehead, cheeks and lips of the one who, still living, was no more than a corpse.

"All is ended for him in this world!" murmured the curé in a low voice. He then placed the cloth over his face, and assisted by the trembling chorist, arranged the tapers for the funeral watches, and recalled the sister, whose duty it was to recite by the deceased the prayers for the dead.

After this he descended into the garden, where he found the little Jeanne, seated in a thoughtful mood, alongside of the fountain, crying silently, her eyes watching intently her father's window.

Seeing him coming, the child very seriously walked to meet him, looking in his face, without daring to speak. "My child," said the good curé, taking her little hand, "your father orders us both to go to Avranches, to the house of a good lady you know, and whom I am certain you will love, Madame de Boutaric."

Jeanne understood all; but she had neither tears, cries, nor sobs; only she became greener than the grass her little feet trod on. "My poor father!" said she, in a tone of deep, almost fierce despair, "I will never see him again!—Never any more! Oh, my God!"

"You will see him again in Heaven, with your mother!"

"Oh, that is not the same thing," she murmured.

Her self-control left her suddenly. Burning tears flowed from her eyes. Sobs, much more violent from having been so long restrained, shook her breast, and she threw herself, with her face on the ground, before the door of the house. The priest, who knew, alas! too well, the weakness and misery of human creatures, unable to bear for any length of time the intensity of such feelings, allowed this sorrow to wear itself out by degrees, from its own excess. In a few moments he bent towards the child, and with an authoritative sweetness touched her gently on the shoulder:

"Jeanne, get up," said he; "it is your father's wish."

The child rose, and without even try-

ing to dry her tears which continued to flow, she said: "Sir, I am ready."

In a few moments the priest and the child, seated in a miserable country vehicle, drawn by a Normandy pony, drove towards Avranches.

CHAPTER III.

THE Colonel Fabre Derville, after rapidly passing the first steps of his noble career; and conquering, whilst still young, the grades that promised to his ambition the most glorious future, had been stopped by a most unlooked-for circumstance. A fever, taken in the marshes of Algiers, rendered a leave of absence necessary, which lasted for two years. At the time when he was about to join his regiment, the colonel, who was thirty-nine years of age, met near Avranches, Mademoiselle de Myrians. Of an ancient family, Mademoiselle de Myrians was one of those accomplished women the world seldom offers us, as if to show us that if perfection is a rarity, it is not a myth. Nothing had spoiled the happy disposition of her sweet nature. To all her other qualities she added the charm of perfect goodness, which makes the happiness of those among whom we live. Colonel Derville understood all the treasures of this adorable soul, for he confided his future to her with a security and abandonment that nothing ever disturbed.

Much younger than her husband, Elise nevertheless felt for him a deep affection, which, with years, became a rare passion. He was everything for her, even as she was everything to him. It was real conjugal love; a rare phenomenon in the heart of our old worn-out society; conjugal love in its greatest height, the most brilliant and the most pure. With this radiant serenity, which the calm and satisfied conscience alone can give, a great poet has said, "They love well who love in sin and fear." Perhaps there may be, for certain natures, unfortunately, too powerful an attraction in those passions where an incessant fear intensifies the always-troubled joys.

The daughters of Adam are also the daughters of Eve, and the forbidden fruit, although it is no longer offered by the serpent, has not the less an irresistible attraction. There are others, on the contrary, for whom happiness is never separated from *duty*, and to whose heart it is necessary to feel its sweetest desires, sanctioned by Heaven and by earth, to be surrounded by the favor of God and the respect of men.

Such a one was Mlle. Elise de Myrians; she was one of those souls that the Northern poets, with a graceful flattery, call "the white souls;" and like the white ermine, she could have taken this motto of an old British heraldry—"A stain will kill me."

This stain never came. She died in her beauty, in her youth, and in the joys of her first love. They could give her for a shroud, her bridal robe, and place in her tomb, instead of the yellow immortelles, the crown of orange blossoms, emblem of the ideal purity of the virgin soul.

Sometimes in the evenings, seated by her husband on the doorstep, Elise would nurse the little Jeanne, while he read aloud:

In looking at her, with that beautiful forehead, those transparent temples, with her large eyes veiled by the long lashes whose shadows moved on her cheeks, one would involuntarily dream of those beautiful Madonnas, of the most illustrious painters of the Virgin Mother; for whom Raphael exhausted all the resources of the divine art, and who are for us to-day, in their adorable type, the emblem of this fecund purity, and of this chaste maternity,of which the Christian alone has been able to realize the idea upon this earth.

Mme. Derville's face was truly the index of her soul. Her mind never had one thought, nor her heart an emotion of which her husband was not the object.

There are times in men's lives when the entire, deep, exclusive love they inspire in a woman has for them a dear value—it is when they reach the end of their youth; when they approach mature age; when they generally cause a calm, lasting affection, rather than an enthusiastic passion. Then this intense devotion of a young and charming girl, makes them envied by every one, and is for them one of the most delicious of flatteries. It brings back to them the

bright hopes of the past. They feel it is their last chance of happiness—an unexpected, unhoped for chance, that will never return again ; and they seize and cling to it with that ardor which all departing blessings inspire.

Have you ever contemplated the last rose of the fall? That pale rose which seems already fading on its stem? It has the charm of passing beauty, which dies and disappears. A deep, fleeting charm—a melancholy symbol of our momentary pleasures, our rapid endings, our ephemeral joys. We gather it with an involuntary emotion, and we breathe its sweet perfume with unexpected pleasure. This symbolizes the whole history of this sweet love-marriage.

Col. Derville had for this young wife, who gave herself entirely to him, an unbounded affection—she was everything to him, as he was everything to her. The little kingdom that she ruled became his universe. The present caused him to forget the future. He forgot glory in love, and the white hedges of the Rosery bordered his horizon.

A little girl, born to them in the second year of their marriage, completed their happiness, and gave the last joy which they needed. This happiness, deeper than all other human joys. To see their love live again in the fruit of this same love, to see her increase and develop before their eyes, alongside of them, between them, this little soul—daughter of their soul!

A child! is it not, between two lovers, as a living treaty of union?

The colonel adored Jeanne, for her exact likeness to her mother; Mme. Derville, because she felt her husband's love increase after the child's birth ; or, without looking for so many reasons, both loved her because she was their own. Thus was completed this perfect, harmonious whole called "the family," in the midst of which our best feelings are developed, and which is perfect when the father, the mother and the child are combined in the same group. A thought often found in ancient writings, has caused me a vague superstitious terror. It represents the gods as jealous of men, and with difficulty permitting their happiness. I am perfectly aware that man, according to ancient theology, was not created by the gods, but, on the contrary, *against* their will. Whilst the Supreme Being, such as modern theories teach, is at the same time a Creator and a Father.

And, alas! when we see how rapidly our few days of allotted happiness escape, never to return, we unconsciously turn towards the ancient belief, and ask if it is not possible that a superior antagonistic power takes a wicked delight in blighting our joys in their birth. The worm always attacks the most brilliant flowers or the most delicious fruit.

Suddenly, in the midst of her delights of mother and of wife, Mme. Derville was taken with a mysterious, deep-rooted disease, that science soon declared incurable. At first, it was languor and depression, but, as it increased, soon turned to an unquiet restlessness. The disease overcame her, spread through her entire system, and resisted all remedies with a determined obstinacy. In watching her incessant walks, one could note her steps towards the fatal end. Already the eye increased in size, whilst the pupil shone with fervent brilliancy in the midst of liquid waters. Already one could see on her attenuated cheeks, blossom those roses of sickness, those flowers of death, which foretell the consumption of human creatures, as the violets and primroses herald forth the spring.

Soon the Avranches doctors, frightened at the heavy responsibility which such an event would bring upon them—an event foreseen and inevitable—had the modesty to discover themselves powerless. But, as these men of the faculty never *avow* such a thing, they took another road to arrive at the same end. They ordered the supreme remedy to which, from custom, they always turn when all else fails: They spoke of warm climates, of the beneficial sun of Provence, of the dry air, laden with the perfume of oranges, that is breathed in the fortunate latitudes of Nice, of Cannes and of Hyères. Take the young invalid to the South!

"There is nothing serious the matter with you, dear child," said the first doctor to Mme. Derville, at the end of this consultation (he had brought her into the world, and loved her as his own child), "only the winter will be hard here this year, some teals have come

already from the North Cape—this is a bad sign; our damp air is horrid. It is really necessary that you go South!"

"You then order me, doctor, the only remedy that is not in my power."

"Still it is necessary, dear madam.''

"That may be, but is yet more impossible!"

"And why impossible, my angel?" said the colonel, joining in this little discussion.

"The word impossible is blotted out of the dictionary, when your health and happiness are the subject on the tapis."

"Dost thou know, my dear friend, what such a voyage would cost?"

"I know only that I love thee," murmured the colonel, "and nothing will be too dear that will bring the smile to thy lips, and the roses to thy cheeks, and the light to thine eyes. For thee I would sacrifice my all. Dear Elise, for thee I would give my life." And turning to the doctor—

"Doctor," said he, "we will start when you think best."

Madame Derville gave her husband one of those looks which reward a man for every sacrifice.

"And Jeanne?" said she in a moved and troubled voice, "what will we do with our little Jeanne?"

"Her, indeed! why we will take her along."

"Edward, thou art as good as God!" said the poor woman with passionate fervor, carrying his hand to her lips with an impetuous movement.

"Little fool! is it being good only to love thee?"

"Where people are as happy as that," murmured the doctor, in a philosophic aside, "one ought never to die!

"At last, who knows?" added he, shrugging his shoulders. "All whom we condemn are not executed. But the poor lady is very ill, in truth."

CHAPTER IV.

COLONEL DERVILLE was a man of action, as most men who have served in the army become, and he brought into civil life the exactitude and promptness of his military habits.

What he once determined he promptly executed. Not liking to wait, he never made others wait. He took, therefore, active measures for their departure. The doctor, moreover, allowed him neither truce nor rest, telling him that each hour's delay increased the danger—that each hour gained gave her a new chance for health. Under these circumstances one can be sure that Elise's husband did not remain long in Normandy.

"Dear doctor, we will leave in two days, perhaps to-morrow—this evening, if you please; but you give me hope, do you not?"

"Most certainly; only start."

After the colonel's deep sorrow and bitter despair, this gave him a ray of hope, which raised him, cheered him, and gave him fresh courage. He seemed to see his dear wife gayer, stronger, cured.

Happy, triumphant, he will bring her back to the Rosery, rejuvenated and beautiful, to be his joy and comfort for many long years.

The colonel always believed what he desired. We must see how he packed in the trunks every thing he thought necessary, useful, or only agreeable to his wife. In order to add an iota to her pleasure, he would have carried even the house!

Madame Derville followed all these busy movements with a sickly smile and sad expression. This look and smile said, Poor friend, how many useless things thou art taking. All this will do me no good. Thy wife will never see another spring.

The husband fortunately could not read all this.

As to Madame Derville, she always forgot herself for others. In the anguish of approaching death, she thought only of hiding the advance of the fatal moment in order to delay the sorrow of so dear a friend, and to enchant the last moments they spent together.

It was joy for the husband to leave the Rosery, whilst it was profound sorsow for the wife. She felt so certain she would never again see the house where she was born, where she had grown up and tasted the joys of maiden, wife, and mother; joys, the most pure and deep of all holy affections. In saying farewell to it for ever, she bade farewell to all her happy life; she however crushed her grief and hid her tears.

They started early in October, on a cold damp misty morning. A dark veil enshrouded all things and hid the view, as if to prevent the poor lady from casting a last look at all these charming scenes, dear to her soul, that her eyes would never see again.

The noble silhouette of Mt. St. Michel, this darkness of the place, this spouting rock of misty sable, projected like a granite gun towards the sand, and, vaguely outlined in the mist, seemed a phantom rising from the depths of the sea to weep. The Rosery weeps for its adored mistress. Railroads, which were a long time kept away from the beautiful province of Normandy, on account of its devotion to old customs, did not then unite as they do now, the North and South of France by a union of fire.

M. Derville, therefore, took a post-chaise, to be able to regulate his journey according to the health of his dear invalid. Perhaps the novelty and change of scene brought an agreeable diversion to the invalid, or, out of gratitude to her husband, she tried to seem interested in everything, and showed during the journey an animation which seemed of the happiest augury to the colonel, ever awake for the most favorable symptoms.

From the first evening he rejoiced at having brought her away. The heavens were more blue, the climate warmer, nature in its entirety more gentle; in forty-eight hours they felt the sweet influence of the South. The young invalid's breast felt a long-unknown sensation of health. The journey, broken by frequent rests, was satisfactory and full of promise. With what delicate and charming cares the colonel surrounded his precious invalid! how he considered and remembered everything! Everything was arranged in advance, so that she would have nothing to make her uncomfortable.

It is only in suffering, that a woman can fully appreciate the true worth of the man who loves her; she then finds the infinity of his tenderness.

"How good thou art!" Elise would say to her husband. "I wish I could repay all thou art doing for me!"

"You will repay me by getting well," replied the colonel.

CHAPTER V.

IN ten days they reached the Gorges d'Olliantes, that oasis of verdure and flowers found in the cleft of the rocks. The scene was new and glorious for those who had only been familiar with the pastoral scenery of Normandy. The masses of craggy rocks descending to unfathomable depths, the broken outlines of a colossal staircase attached to a bare and shining wall, all looked like the enclosure of a giant's fortress.

These grand broken masses, which the rain and burning sun have colored in some places with tints of red, brown and gold, and are speckled here and there by the pale green Italian pines, struck Madame Derville with open astonishment. It was such a contrast to what she had seen in her own green home.

On leaving the Gorges, the carriage came into a pretty fertile plain, surrounded by an outline of undulating hills which protected its various cultures. There were vast fields of immortelles shining here and there, like a carpet of golden cloth.

"Why do they have all these funeral flowers?" asked the young wife, who, without being superstitious, could not help shuddering on seeing these sad emblems of our sorrows and eternal regrets, which are raised in the warm soil of Provence with such success, that they are enabled to supply the whole demand of Europe.

The colonel, instead of replying, endeavored to turn her attention from these sad thoughts by pointing out the view. The Mediterranean, seen between the hills, shivered like a blue wave with the slight breath of the wind.

"See, how beautiful!" said he.

La Provence, which the poet Le Brun, that plagiarist of Pindar, has called in some place "a perfumed beggar," displays at this season, already cold under other skies, a seduction and beauty, which strike the inhabitants of the North. When with them all is ice and snow, here, on the contrary, all is warmth and brightness. The soul of woman, more given than ours to all emotion, yields with much greater ease to happy or unhappy external impressions. Elise, naturally sensitive and delicate, rendered still more so by her illness, tasted in all its

sweetness the charms of this natural enchantress.

She revelled in the South. By their deep and varied expression, their changing vapors, their ever pale clouds—even in their most beautiful days—the skies of the North are in perfect harmony with the manners and feelings of the unjoyous races who exist undisturbed under their sad canopy.

But the heavens of the South, pavilion of blue, barely tinted with silver by the passage of some slight vaporous currents, seems made only to shelter the feasts and gaieties of man.

When one has not seen this beautiful sky, with its deep blue at the zenith, and which, touched by insensible clouds, fades away at the horizon into the glorious colors of the opal, one has not experienced all the joys that can enter the soul of man by the eyes. One ought to pass life slowly in the midst of this unvarying serenity, in this profusion of clearness, in this pouring out of brightness. What inexhaustible riches, what incessant beauty, is renewed in these two sweet colors!

Blue and white! they approach each other, unite themselves, blend together, and end by vanishing, the one in the other.

By short easy journeys, resting at the most beautiful places, at Hyères, where all is warmed by the sun till the sea-breeze arrives; at Cannes, where the earth, by its thousand undulations, forms so many beautiful nooks, one could call them so many lovely nests, expecting as their occupants, love and happiness; they at last reach Nice, the place selected by the colonel for their winter abode.

CHAPTER VI.

THE last of our French conquests is also the sweetest. It reconciles us to the slightly savage term "Annexation," that is not precisely understood at the Hotel de Rambouillet. What seems rather incomprehensible to me, is, how it happened that France has gained, by its own free election, this delicious little corner of the earth! It would please me less if it had run with blood. Nice always makes me dream of a beautiful creature, that one would receive only as a free gift. To coerce her, would take away all her value.

Her inhabitants, feeling as ourselves, have avoided giving us the trouble of conquering them. They have become French at their own desire, and they love France because it is their nature. Nice is the country of sun and of flowers, of repose, of indolence, of forgetfulness. One could pass life there repeating the languishing verse of the 'song of the slave,' in the opening of Galatea:

"Ah! but it is sweet to be idle!"

In this delightful climate it is a pleasure to exist.

Overlooking everything, there is a terrace which is the glory and fortune of Nice—the rendezvous of elegant and aristocratic Europe.

From no other point does the Mediterranean appear under a more charming aspect, or her cloth of blue in a more brilliant light. Nowhere else do her thousand waves seem to break into more darling little dimples.

A little below this terrace, on the side of the walk "Des Ponchettes," which leads to the mountain of Chateau, and is shaded from its foot to its highest peak by laurels and pines, in a most charming situation—in the midst of a superb vegetation, where violets grow as large as periwinkles, where the mallows become shrubs, and the fuchsias trees, where the geraniums and laurels form miniature forests—M. Derville found a beautiful little villa, built entirely of white marble, decorated with statues, half hidden under such verdure.

It had been built by a Russian, the owner of several thousands of those miserable serfs, that are called even in this day, "des Ames Morts," and who live to yield their best parts to their masters.

On a sign from the absolute autocrat of all the Russias, the Prince de T. had been forced to leave this terrestrial paradise for the frozen infernal regions of Siberia! M. Derville could therefore settle his dear wife at once.

"How pleasant it is to live here!" said Elise, laying her hand on her husband's, who was leading her to her chamber from whence they could see, spread before them, the most splendid panorama in the world.

CHAPTER VII.

SYMPTOMS of improvement for the first few days set to rest, in a false security, the lawful uneasiness of the colonel. But after this short reaction, nearly always produced by a change of climate, the disease gained the ascendancy. It progressed with such rapid strides that in two weeks all the poor husband's fears returned, more bitter from the bright hopes he had nourished.

Elise clung to life, at the moment it was passing away, with that passionate ardor so often felt by the dying. Besides the natural horror which the approaching end and the unknown region of death inspires in all human beings, the wife of a man so beloved and loving, the mother of such an adorable child, had she not a thousand reasons to desire life and fear death? Death, so bitter, because it would separate them!

The colonel led one celebrated physician after another to his wife's bedside. Consultations succeeded and prescriptions followed, without producing the desired result. As no one likes people to die in their village where they have come to be cured, they agreed to make Madame Derville go to some other place. The season was so unusally bad. Nice, generally spared, was this year subject to violent gusts of the north-west wind from the Alps. There was, perhaps, an imprudence in braving the caprice of a rebellious climate. This opinion was conveyed gently by insinuations into the ear of M. Derville, who really did not know what to do. However, the last winds of the hurricanes departed, wafted over the Mediterranean, and Nice soon regained the calm and beautiful days which make the charm of her sky. They remain.

But the poor invalid did not rally from the too deep shock. She lived, languishing, nervous, crushed to the heart; feeling already dead; so certain did her end appear.

"Thou canst not save me, my poor Edward," said she to her husband; "which proves alas! too well! that love is powerless to conquer death!"

"But I am determined to save thee! You do not know what they now assert!"

"No, indeed! Tell me?"

"Well, they assure me that, by some fatal exception, the climate this year is bad for delicate chests, and that the air is now too sharp for thee!"

"Dost thou not see," said she, looking despairingly at her husband, "how they hunt me from all spots?"

"Oh, no! my child, they do not hunt thee—do be reasonable—they only say that the neighborhood of the sea is too strong for thee; and that an interior village, in a central spot, will suit you better, as the atmosphere will not be so full of oxygen. What can I do? It is they who speak thus, not I! I hardly understand them! but they certainly speak the truth, for they seem very learned men. We will then go to Lyons or to Paris, if you like—only get stronger."

"Yes, it is that! only feel stronger!" replied she; with a look and a countenance that chilled the colonel to the marrow of his bones.

He kissed his wife's burning brows, saying, in a low tone, "Oh! Elise, you cannot know the sorrow you give me."

"Alas! it is not my fault! I must accustom thee, by degrees, to the truth—sad as it is for us both. It is only I who will tell thee, love; all the others deceive thee. Dost thou not understand? They are trying to get rid of us—they prefer I should not die at Nice. It will have a bad effect. An invalid who will die! I shall compromise the reputation of the city. Do you not remember that they mentioned the other day that this 'ill wind' came only every few years? I believe they have sent others away as they wish to do me! But I will not go!" said she, like a spoiled child. "No! I will not go! I will die here out of spite!"

A tear fell slowly from the colonel's eye, and rolled silently down his cheek, but he could not reply.

At this moment the poor invalid was interrupted by a fit of coughing, which shook violently her frail frame. This attack was long, cruel, and terrible. The invalid withdrew her handkerchief from her lips all stained with blood, and looked silently at her husband. M. Derville hid his face against the bed, and it required great effort to suppress the sobs that shook his breast! We will not record the history of this agony. Alternated by days of quietness, and the most fearful crises, the colonel, in the

depth of his sorrow, followed with too clear a sight ever to be again deceived, the turns of that drama, whose concluding scene would carry away his whole happiness.

The sad truth they had been so certain about for a long time, and which they had endeavored to disguise by a sort of pious fraud, became so evident that dissimulation was impossible. Since their marriage they had lived in such intimate relationship, not only of feelings but of thought, that this constraint had been painful for both. They experienced, therefore, even in their agony, a sweetness in mingling their tears.

When two have loved faithfully, loyally, ardently, when there has been one mind for both, and for both only one heart, separation, with her stern rigours, has a bitterness that nothing can equal, that nothing can describe. It is the misfortune of all the hardest and most severe; it is the misfortune without consolation.

From the time the unmerciful truth of this separation was revealed to them, both acknowledged its approach; they spoke of it with a calmness in their sorrow, which proved how deep that sorrow was.

Elise, especially, as the fatal time drew near, gained more and more that serenity, which gives a sublime pathos to some deaths. She forgot herself in thinking of others.

"Poor friend! thou art the most to be pitied," she sometimes said to her husband. "For I go and thou hast to remain!

"Still! you must bear up. I leave with thee my 'souvenir,' our little Jeanne. The poor child will scarcely have known her mother.

"Thou wilt love her well, Edward! Thou wilt love her *now* for both of us! and some day she will love thee for me."

CHAPTER VIII.

IT was in the midst of such conversations, sad and grave, though melancholy and sweet, that Mme. Derville awaited her end. Trying to leave with her husband only a sweet remembrance, and forcing herself to enchant for him the last hours they would pass together, as he had charmed all life for her, until the last moment she was adorable and adored. Never had she seemed more worthy of love than at the moment love was losing her.

Notwithstanding all the care with which Mr. Derville had surrounded her, it seemed to him as if he had not done enough for her; he reproached himself with ingratitude and accused himself of not knowing the whole value of his treasure. He thanked Heaven, kind even in its sternness, that permitted him to prolong the farewells, to add remembrance to remembrance, and thus to lay up those pious relics of tenderness, that one enshrines in the very depths of the heart.

One glorious morning in the spring, whilst the blue of heaven and that of the sea wrestled together for splendor and brightness, Mme. Derville felt a sensation of health. The brightness of the day struck her windows joyously. She ordered them to be opened, to admit the sun's rays. Jeanne, half naked, was playing on the rich carpet at her feet, when the colonel came in, carrying a large bouquet of roses, that he placed on the bed. For sometime the invalid had had a very passion for roses, and each morning her husband rifled the borders and greenhouses of the gardeners of Nice.

"Dear Edward," said she, holding out her hands to him, "Thou art always so good!"

"How dost thou feel this morning?"

"I dare not tell thee, almost well!"

"My God! If this were true!"

The little girl ran to see the beautiful flowers her father had brought. With a movement full of grace, but of a languishing grace, for she was in truth very weak, taking the child around her neck, Elise drew the little head to the bouquet, as if she wished to compare the roses on her child with those, they had gathered for her. The bouquet was not fresher than the sweet young face. She kissed her daughter on the forehead, then, raising herself on the pillow, she bent over the half-untied bunch; the bunch, with such sweet perfume, such lively colors, that it made her seem still more pale.

Some seconds passed without her rais-

ing her head. The colonel felt a vague terror, for which he could not account, even to himself. He spoke to his wife, softly at first, and then, as she did not answer, a little louder. She remained steadily without moving. He touched her lightly with his finger. The caressing touch, which so often had made her start, left her now completely unmoved. This frightened him more than all the rest. "Elise! Elise! speak to me! Only then speak to me," cried he with a painful sob.

Elise did not speak. He threw himself on the bed, and with a shudder of fear, took his wife in his arms, raised her, held her straight, leaning against his breast. Elise's lips discolored, her forehead was of marble, her cheeks white as those of a corpse, and her large eyes extinguished.

The colonel felt his limbs tremble under him. "My God! my God!" murmured he, with such a weak voice, it seemed like a breath from his lips. He knew already, but he still wished to doubt; one might say he refused to understand the sad truth. He drew his wife a little from him as if to examine her better. The head fell on his shoulder inert, and soon fell back again. This time he could doubt no more. Mme. Derville was dead; dead without a cry; without a convulsion; without any of the usual accompaniments of dying. Softly as she had lived, while extending her hand to her husband, whilst embracing her daughter, whilst breathing the sweet perfume of a rose.

Half lying on the carpet, the child placed herself to play with the carelessness of her age. The coldness of death came. M. Derville wished to contend with it, yet, for the one he had loved so much. He pressed her to him with transports of wild passion, lavished on her the sweetest names and caresses, whose ardor would have reanimated her, if the Divine Creator, supreme and jealous Master of all things, had not reserved the gift of life to *himself alone.*

Instinctively, without knowing why, Jeanne became afraid and screamed loudly. The servants ran into the chamber from all quarters; they unclasped the arms which held so tightly embraced the poor dead one, and whilst making the *husband* loosen his hold, they showed to the *father* the child for whom he ought still to live.

CHAPTER IX.

M. DERVILLE'S grief was deep, profound, unending. If friends had been near him, I doubt if they could have consoled him. He was alone and could abandon himself to the bitter voluptuousness of his tears. They ran at first with a fierce abundance; but the cares and troubles, which drive us to the depths of despair, after the dead, so much lamented, impose a species of truce to their desolation. He desired to take his wife with him to that Normandy, which she would have loved, so much better, never to have left. "She would have been alive now!" said he, "if I had not brought her from her accustomed climate to this atmosphere so fatal for her lungs. It is I, who have killed her! Soon let us leave! Dry our tears! I will weep to-morrow—to-day; I have no right to do so."

Alone in a strange country, that which in France had been only a simple form, raised for him each instant the most unforeseen difficulties, and the most trying complications. He was obliged to take a thousand steps to obtain the requested authorizations. That was not all; he could not without a secret pang confide his dear lost one to the hands of those, who under the pretext of preserving, must first profane her by their contact. Conquering at last his strong instinctive repugnance, he allowed them to give her the funeral cares, which prolong the illusion of our fragile beauty, for those eyes that do not regard us as the inhabitants of another world. He then enclosed her in a double coffin of oak and lead, and carried her across France. Sad journey! so different from the one he had just made with her—she living. The sweet words, the dear presence, the charming caresses of Jeanne was all that could distract his sorrow.

The arrival at the Rosery was not less painful than the journey. He felt so truly, that the one who had been for so long its ornament, would leave there after her sadness and grief for ever

When he reached the entrance of his house, an inexpressible agony struck his heart. The miserable man became as pale as death itself. All the village waited on him, in order to render with him those last supreme duties to a woman, that none could know without loving. The poor deceased re-entered then into her home, in the midst of universal respect and sorrow.

Soon led by the priest, accompanied by her husband, followed by their united friends, one of God's most charming creatures went to take possession of the cold abode that is kept for us all, until the day when the trumpet of the Angel shall awake for judgment the pale troops of the dead!

Alone now, in his too large house—one, after having been two—Colonel Fabre Derville devoted himself entirely to his love for Jeanne. To occupy himself with his daughter, was it not to occupy himself still with his wife? Elise thus remained the only thought of his soul. He was no longer at the age when one can begin life again. Besides, one loved not twice as he had loved, and better not to love at all than to love less. Even the certainty that he felt within of the eternity of his sorrow, made him taste the only joy he could now appreciate. The one a great poet has so well named "the joy of grief." Time could not heal this sorrow. Time, that kills so many things, could not kill that. It could not act on itself.

The days passed over his grief, which remained always the same. He did not wish to console himself, for *she* was no more! However, the necessities of every day life; the exactments of practical questions, accounts, business; all those things, to which poetic, meditative, or sentimental organizations attend little enough, brought to M. Derville some cruel distractions. With his very moderate pension and the not much greater fortune of his wife, the colonel, thanks to much order and economy, was enabled to live honorably in one of the rare counties of France, where the material existence had not yet followed the exorbitant rise in the prices of everything, that characterized all other places. But when one is brought into full face with all his obligations, that he must instantly fulfil by a miracle of balance, the chapter of unforeseen accidents, of profits and of loss, has sometimes the most terrible consequences. It upsets in a moment the best established calculations, and makes that balance, which has been so skilfully maintained, between the receipt and the expense, lean all at once to the wrong side. This is what happened in the colonel's house.

The sickness and the death of his wife were not for him a mental catastrophe alone. They were also a cause of ruin.

At first with the hope of curing her; later, with the touching, noble desire to relieve and soften her last days; the unhappy husband had spared nothing. He had paid largely everywhere, without counting, without bargaining. The wife of a millionaire could not have been surrounded with more costly attentions.

He had been forced to borrow the money to enable him to take the journey to Nice. A Norman banker, perfectly acquainted with Avranches, knowing nearly to a cent the value of the Rosery, and who, perchance, thought he would place this charming jewel among the wedding presents of a young and pretty woman, whom he intended to marry, showing himself very easy as to terms when the colonel with an unsuspecting volubility made his first overtures, advanced the required sum on a simple note, at a short date, however.

"The man who has time owes nothing," says a proverb, undoubtedly circulated by dishonest debtors. One signs easily before a ready lender, when one needs money. Later one will pay—if he can!

The note matured with a terrible rapidity. It was presented at his house shortly after his return from Nice, while he was still entirely engrossed by his grief. At such a time, he was incapable of the slightest application. How, then, could he find the requisite funds to redeem his note? A small landowner cannot suddenly provide himself to meet unlooked-for demands, as the trader or merchant.

The man of the sword must yield then necessarily to the man of money. The first note, unpaid, was naturally protested—then renewed—but with stricter conditions—shorter time—fresh forfeiture!—that is of no account! The matur-

ing of the second note found the colonel in no better condition, and the second note remained unpaid like the first. But this time it bore not a simple protest. There was authority to confess judgment, followed by summons, injunction, and execution. In a word, all this hideous cortege of formalities and proceedings, so marvellously combined to aid the creditor to devour more rapidly what the Roman law calls, in her energetic style, so truly, "the substance of the debtor."

It is with the fortune of a private gentleman as with a well-built wall. While it remains intact, it seems as if it could brave with impunity the assault of all destructive agents. But let only one stone fall; ruin commences, and is soon complete; all gives way.

The colonel, who had previously gone only to the most honorable houses, those who are contented with a moderate profit, because they exact before all else perfect security, now fell into the hands of a lower class of business men, sharpers and rapacious handlers of money, who push the art of deceiving the inexperienced to the last limits, abusing the weak and distraining the goods of the unfortunate.

In this ever-widening gulf, in this series of deficiencies, appearing to yield an instant only to gain double strength, a fortune is soon swallowed up. That of the colonel was soon compromised enough to justify the sad presentiments that agitated his last moments. The shadow of approaching ruin mingled on his forehead with the shadow of present death. By means of the powers of vigilance, precaution, and even of a certain skill he had acquired in the contest with the sharpers, he had gained, or planned in his mind, the way to escape the storm. He dead, the storm would burst, as he well knew; and he desired that it should not burst on the innocent, feeble head of his poor little Jeanne. This is the reason he ordered the curé to take the child to the house of the Marquise de Boutaric—one of the most commendable persons in Avranches—in whose affection he had perfect faith.

CHAPTER X.

WHILST on the road through Brittany, which leads from Avranches to Saint Malo, the priest and child rode silently side by side; the one lost in his grave thoughts, the other engrossed by her young sorrow. We can therefore read in advance the letter the colonel addressed to the marquise, which the little orphan carried to her.

"*Dear and Worthy Friend:*—We will meet no more in this world. The doctors have sentenced me, and I have not appealed. You know, dear marquise, that death has nothing frightful in it for me. Alas! it has already exhausted on me all its blows. It has taken, with my dear Elise, all the desires I had to live, and it would be truly welcome to me, if I did not leave my little orphan. I confess to you, Jeanne's future is an object of singularly painful reflection. The poor child would be absolutely alone in the world, if I had not had the happiness of obtaining your good will. I confide her to you. It is the legacy that my poverty has made to your tenderness. Be for her all that I ought to have been; all I have not been able to be; and, instead of losing, she will have gained by my death. You alone are capable of replacing her mother. Jeanne is a good girl. I believe I can say so without being accused of the blind partiality of a parent's affection, for I know what she is. I am not ignorant of her failings—she is a pupil of nature; she knows the leaves of the trees better than the leaves of the books. The history of her garden has always interested her more than the history of France. I confess to you that she can hardly read. Fortunately, she is only nine years old, and at this age nothing is lost.

"My fortune, singularly diminished by my ill luck, will not suffice to give her the education that such a child as herself ought to receive. But thanks to God, the munificence of the state has provided largely for the wants of her servants, who like myself are richer in honor than in money.

"The House of Saint Denis, formerly called the House of Saint Cyr, founded by our kings, enlarged and developed by our emperors, enables us to place our daughters alongside those of princes and

of millionaires. As this is the only inheritance I am able to leave my poor child, it may perhaps suffice to pay my debt to her. The doors of Saint Denis open on the world. She must choose, on leaving there, the path she intends to pursue. It is for that moment especially that I solicit your protection and advice. She will then require it more than ever.

"When you read this letter, I shall be no more, and my daughter will be near you. Will you do me the favor to take her immediately to Paris, and introduce her to the Baron de Noirlieu, second clerk to the High Chancellor of the Legion of Honor. He has served with me and is my friend. M. de Noirlieu is advised of your coming. You will pardon me, dear marquise, for thus taking your consent for granted. My friend will place himself at your command, take all the necessary steps, and spare you all fatigue and trouble. The whole affair can be arranged in a few days.

"It will not take you longer than one week, and you will have rendered me the last and greatest service that I could ever claim from your goodness. And now, my dear and honored friend, thank you again, and a long, long farewell until we meet in the other world, that is called 'a better world,' and will be truly so for me, if I find there again the one that I have loved since I have known her, that I have mourned since I have lost her."

Madame de Boutaric was at home when the curé called with Jeanne. The daughter of the colonel had not spoken during the journey; the priest had respected her grief. When they arrived, Jeanne was still bathed in tears.

The marquise was a tall woman, with stiff manners, stern countenance and abrupt ways—but with a good heart, a warm, generous soul. Mme. de Boutaric had felt a very true affection for Mme. Derville, and almost as great an attachment for her husband. The colonel had not presumed too much on her devotion, when he confided to her his little orphan. But although the marquise was in truth the best person in the world, Jeanne, accustomed to the sweet pettings of her father, always felt when first near her an instinctive, unreasonable fear, but which was not the less real.

Have you never noticed how full the soldier is of grace and tender affection for the child? Do you remember the bees of the Bible depositing their honey in the carcass of the lion killed by Samson, that Hercules of the Jews? One there sees, according to the Holy Scriptures, sweetness coming out of strength! So, this is what they find in the hearts of heroes; they have the true hearts of fathers. M. Derville's affection possessed a charm that Mme. de Boutaric, so perfectly good in other respects, absolutely needed. Was this not cause enough, that a poor little one raised as Jeanne had been, in an atmosphere of perpetual adoration, should experience near her an instinctive fear? Notwithstanding all her efforts, she could not conquer this first impression. The aspect of the house, moreover—this air of all things—to which children are much more sensitive than is generally believed, increased with Jeanne this fearful unconquerable feeling. The marquise lived in one of those old villas, completely provincial, and absolutely ignorant of all the modern comforts and elegancies, but which breathed still the sternness of past centuries. There was, above all, a parlor, furnished with red leather, protected from the too brilliant light of day by three curtains hung at the sides of the deep windows, decorated with threatening arms and discolored portraits of the family—all with knitted brows! When the poor little one entered this salon, a shudder passed over her and she trembled from head to foot. She had never been there except with her father, and only to remain a few moments, certain of soon regaining her accustomed nest among the flowers, and under the leaves of the Rosery. Now, she found herself abandoned to a stranger for an uncertain period. Ignorant of her destiny—her soul still filled entirely with the dark scenes that had been unveiled before her eyes—she tremblingly seated herself in a corner, on the edge of her chair, as one who dared not do more, her little hands joined on her knees, and her pale cheeks wet with the tears she forgot to dry. The marquise hastened to appear. Economical of her own time, she would have reproached herself with wasting that of others. She entered quickly, abruptly, and went at once up to the priest.

"Oh! curé, is it you? By what chance have you come here, without crying make way? No matter! here you are! We welcome you! But, good-morning! Are you dumb? How goes it?"

After this flow of words that nothing could stop; after these pressing questions, to which she did not listen for the replies, she suddenly perceived the child. She went straight to her, crying as she went, and without observing her closely:

"You there, also, my gentle Jeanne? always as fresh as a rose—a pretty white rose—is it not? Come, kiss me then! But what is the matter? You look as if you had been crying? You are crying now! What is the matter, my child?"

While speaking thus the marquise opened her long sinewy arms, and seizing Jeanne between her ten thin fingers, she drew the fresh little face to hers, so angular and tawny, and kissed her on both cheeks, with all the demonstration of affection a nature like hers could display.

"Her father is dead!" said the curé, in a low tone, who found at last the possibility of getting in a word.

"Dead! her father! the colonel! My poor Derville dead! How can you say so, curé?"

"Alas! madame la marquise, I tell the simple truth as it is. M. le colonel is dead!"

"Ah! what do you tell me, there? Derville! poor Derville! It is always the best who go!"

"Those go whom the good God calls; madame, who is so pious, knows that better than I."

"Certainly, certainly. Oh! but I am sorry! And this little one—what will now become of her? Oh, I will be a mother to her," continued she, carried away by a burst of sincere goodness, which formed a singular contrast with her usual sternness, and embracing Jeanne again, she pressed her to her heart as if she really desired to stifle her.

"Madame la marquise, this brave colonel had reason not to doubt you," said the good curé, "and he has left you his daughter as a legacy."

"And I will love her as if she were my own," continued Mme. de Boutaric, twisting Jeanne's hair with her fingers.

"Behold the will!" replied the curé, handing the marquise the letter that M. Derville had given to him in his last moments.

Mme. de Boutaric took the letter, read it slowly and with deep attention, then gave it to the curé, saying, "I believe he is right, at any rate he was the father; and we must obey his wishes. Heaven inspires the dying! Will you dine with me, curé?"

"It is impossible, madame la marquise; a thousand things recall me to my parish. I must inform the friends of the deceased, and arrange all for the interment."

"Then say good-bye to the child, for we shall set out to-morrow."

CHAPTER XI.

FOR two days Jeanne had lived in a dream. She had loved her father tenderly, and his death had plunged her into a stupor; she had not even strength enough left to wish. Accustomed, moreover, to passive obedience, and brought up to the absolute submission of well-reared children, she did not think of opposing the will of the marquise any more than that of her father. Still, when Mme. de Boutaric had said to the curé, in her slightly dry, and always commanding voice (even when the notes of compassion and of goodness vibrating in her soul should have softened it):

"Embrace the child, for we set out to morrow!" a vague feeling of fright struck the colonel's daughter. By an instinctive, uncontrollable movement she seized in her two little hands the cassock of the priest, as if beseeching him not to leave her—to take her with him. The curé could not answer this mute appeal. The child then turned on the marquise a humble look, appealing to her. Doubtless the stern face of her protectress did not encourage her to hope for the least change of plan, for, without a word, she held her pale cheek to the curé, and received his farewell kiss, whilst stifling a big sob.

The good man then took leave of the marquise, after giving her all sorts of advice about the orphan, that he knew was superfluous, but he wished to relieve himself thus, as a last solace to his sor-

row, and out of his lively tenderness for the child.

"All right! all right, my dear curé. But have neither care nor fear," said Mme. de Boutaric, as a kind of adieu, "all that is necessary will be done."

The curé saw that the interview was ended, and withdrew after saluting the marquise with the deep, sincere respect that the clergy of the provinces always feel to the ancient nobility, in remembrance of their interests so strongly united in the past. When the heavy door, with the large dark figures, was closed behind the priest the orphan felt still more abandoned and still more alone in the world; all the ties that attached her to the Rosery broke, one after the other. Mme. de Boutaric had not, alas! what was necessary to reassure her inquietude and her delicate sense of fear, or to calm her vague, deep terrors, and soften the bitter sorrow of this young and infinitely tender soul. Without even asking if the consolations efficacious to *her* age would equally suit that of Jeanne Derville, she placed in her hands a big book of prayers, led her into the chapel, and pointing out the prayers for the dead, said:

"Pray for your father, my child!"

The colonel had said truly. Jeanne hardly knew how to read. It was in vain she spelt without understanding the sense, those grand lamentations and psalms of desolation by which the church tries to console our grief by aiding us to express it. Happily night came and brought sleep—the mighty consoler of childhood, which closes so easily their eyes even when they are full of tears. It is said no trial is spared to those who enter life under such rude auspices. As Jeanne was entering the carriage the next morning, a domestic announced Jacqueline. The robust countrywoman came from the Rosery on foot, having walked the whole way alone, and part of the time at night, to embrace her young mistress for the last time. Jacqueline, a native Bretonne, still young, belonged to that type of servants becoming more and more rare in our days, who, truly attached to their masters, look upon themselves as belonging to the house, and who make up for some inconveniences and faults by a sincere endless devotion! She had been like a mother to the poor little orphan, and lavished on her all the cares her tender age and delicate health demanded; loving her like her own child, and drawn to the poor little one by her very anxieties and cares for her. It is even thus the souls of truly good nurses are captured.

When Jacqueline heard Jeanne was going to this terrible Paris! of which the provincials formerly held such strange ideas, and which still cling to them, and will for a long time, holding it as a mysterious bugbear, she could not control the violence of her feelings, nor the fear mixing with her sorrow. So, when the curé told her the fatal news, her determination was to hasten to Avranches. Prudence and the good sense of the marquise advised her to spare Jeanne a scene as painful as it was useless. She therefore wished to avoid the interview. But Jacqueline was already there, filling the house with her lamentations; and it would have been too cruel to send her away without permitting her to embrace, for the last time, the little one she had loved so intensely, and to whom she was still so devoted.

"Where is this woman?" asked Mme. de Boutaric of the servant who had announced the arrival of the colonel's servant.

"Here, Mme. la Marquise, in the ante-room."

"Tell her to come in."

The marquise, all prepared for her journey, was muffled up in her travelling dress, her carpet-bag at her feet, and holding in her hand a leather case, enclosing what was too large for a sun-shade—too small for an umbrella, and which was covered with puce-colored silk, mounted on a handle of holly, cut from her own garden, firm, solid, thorny—a faithful enough emblem of her own character.

Standing at the corner of the ancient monumental fire-place, which was sculptured in stone and surrounded with two armed, helmeted men, one could see in her attitude how proud and imperious she felt. She had assumed her grand air and terrible look (of an uncertain shade between gray and red, as it were), of which the whole of Avranches dreaded the Olympian movement.

Her nervous hand kneaded the handle of the leather case, and her feet beat on the inlaid floor a measure too abrupt not to be irregular.

A few steps away from her Jeanne stood near a large console table, nearly up to her chin, crumbling a roll silently into a glass of warm milk.

The marquise had hardly uttered the words "Let her come in," before the door opened with a sort of clatter. Jacqueline hurried headlong into the parlor like a hurricane into a valley through a mountain gap! To this ignorant body Mme. de Boutaric was without posture or expression. This rustic did not even seem to see her; and she advanced or rather jumped towards Jeanne Derville, threw her arms around her and raised her from the earth as if she had been a feather.

"It is then true? It is then true, Jeanne, that thou art going away?" said she, looking at the child with her large eyes all red from incessant weeping.

The orphan, instead of replying, turned towards the marquise.

Jacqueline understood that the little one was not acting as she desired, but under the will of another, and one she must also obey.

She now turned to the marquise, joining her hands and saying, in a humble voice and imploring accent, "You are the one who is taking her away! Why do you take her from me?"

The marquise was so entirely unaccustomed to any familiarity from this class of persons, that she did not at first dream of replying. Her astonishment rendered her mute!

It did not seem as if she was speaking to her; and she looked at Jacqueline as if she were some curiosity.

A person is always ready to believe what they desire. Jacqueline, seeing that the marquise did not reply, thought that her prayers and tears had touched the heart of her who desired to take away her little Jeanne. If Madame de Boutaric remained silent, it was simply because she could not refuse her prayer.

With this firm conviction she commenced again. "You will leave her with me, madame, will you not?"

This time the marquise was spoken to so directly it was impossible not to reply. But still, under the influence of the astonishment, caused by this audacious insolence of a servant, she turned a little, and looked at Jacqueline taking a three-quarters attitude that made her particularly majestic. But a daughter of Nature, such as Jacqueline, engrossed by her violent emotions, could not even be impressed by the rather poetic grandeur of that which the artists call a "profile perdu."

She saw nothing, absolutely nothing, of all that! She saw only her Jeanne, whom they wished to take away from her, and whom she wished to keep. She therefore continued her supplications, mingled with her tears.

Madame de Boutaric was learned in physiognomy, and could distinguish a true from a false expression. She was struck with the sorrow, deep affection, and ardent devotion expressed in the angular face of this poor Bretonne, where she also saw truthfulness and loyalty. It was a face that could not lie. Instead of annihilating this impertinent creature by some haughty address, she spoke to her, on the contrary, with gentle kindness.

"My noble girl," said she, "it is very right in you to feel so much interest for your young lady, and I respect you for it. But you should understand I take as much interest in her as yourself; only I am the best judge of what is for her good. If Mlle. Derville leaves the Rosery, it is because she ought to leave the Rosery. I am aware of the colonel's deep love and respect for you. Learn, then, that he himself, when dying, has desired the departure of his daughter. I only fulfil his wishes."

"Ah! the poor, good gentleman! May God aid his soul! How could he wish such a thing?

"He has wished it for the happiness of his daughter."

"Happiness is to be loved, and who will love her like I love her?"

"It is not enough to be loved; one must also love with intelligence, and understand the true interests of those we love!"

"Who will take care of her in this frightful Paris?

"Do not be troubled about that. I will place Mlle. Derville in an establishment where she will need nothing."

An attentive observer would now have noticed in the marquise's tones a growing impatience. Her calmness and moderation, not her ruling qualities, were being put to a rude trial. This trial must not last much longer. Moreover, seeing that she gained nothing by her sweetness and concessions over this persistent and excited spirit, she felt disposed to try her authority, and she did so with her natural energy.

"Jacqueline, listen to me. I take Mlle. Derville away because I choose to do so; and I choose to do so, because it is my duty. Let this satisty you!"

Perhaps this did not absolutely suffice for Jacqueline; but the marquise's tone admitted of no reply, and she dared not raise any more useless objections in the presence of this determined manner. She was therefore silent, but sobbed in such a frightful manner, with a ferocious violence, as positively frightened Madame de Boutaric.

Determined and cold as right itself, the marquise had a profound horror of all that was false, useless, and exaggerated. But her loyal nature made her respect in others all that which seemed honest and sincere. Although she was much annoyed by Jacqueline's obstinacy, she could understand the quick irritability of her nature, and her only reply to the poor girl's passionate rage was a gesture that seemed to say, what can I do, since the fault is his?

From the time her nurse (I use designedly this childish tender expression) had come into the parlor, Jeanne had ceased eating her slight repast, that was to support her through the day, and listened attentively to all that Jacqueline and Madame de Boutaric said, with an overflowing heart, which she for a long time restrained. But hearing the sobs of this devoted soul, who for so many years had lived with her and for her, she could contain herself no longer, but threw herself into the arms of her faithful Bretonne, with a burst of affection that would make a mother's heart tremble to the core. Both for an instant, though separated by their different stations, yet drawn together by their mutual affection, confounded their tears and mingled their caresses.

"Ah," said the marquise, "I see the little one knows how to love and to win love. Can this be the secret of happiness? Is it not rather the deadly peril of women's existence?" But it was not a habit of Madame de Boutaric to waste much time in philosophical or moral reflections.

She touched Jacqueline with the end of her case, speaking only one word, "Enough!"

The diligence was already at the gate. The marquise took Jeanne's hand, saying, "Come, my child!" The daughter of the colonel consequently detached herself from Jacqueline's embrace and followed, looking constantly back at the poor Bretonne, who had been for so many years the guardian of her life.

A few moments later the heavy machine, well named in being called the diligence, rolled over the pavements, causing them to groan under its weight, and, drawn vigorously by its six pampered dapple-gray horses, carried our heroine to her unknown destiny.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

THE sorrows of childhood are generally on the surface of the heart. It is only as we grow older that sorrow throws her deep roots into the centre of our being.

Trials are always proportioned to the strength of those to whom they are sent. A merciful Providence tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.

Jeanne Derville had never experienced the sensations of a journey. Le Mont Saint Michel had bounded the horizon of her life, and the clocks of Avranches were her pillars of Hercules. I do not refer to her sad trip to Nice, with her mother, whom she lost there, for she was then too young to remember. Now she knows how to observe, how to understand. The journey would then, whether she wished it or no, have for her an all-powerful attraction—a serious interest. One has truly said: "The door of the carriage which takes us on a journey is a window which opens on the world. Each turn of the rapid wheels displaces one centre of observation, and every moment we see the varied prospects open and withdraw."

The lively impressions of a journey snatch us from our preoccupations, take us out of ourselves and enter our whole nature. This is the reason, that in many diseases which have moral causes for their roots, experienced doctors usually advise travelling. They wish to cure the soul before they undertake the cure of the body.

La Marquise de Boutaric thought thus, whilst from her corner observing, silently and earnestly, Jeanne's countenance. At her age, she reflected, impressions are naturally fleeting; one effaces the other. God has thus willed it. She has undoubtedly grieved much for her father, but these youthful griefs are quickly forgotten. Tears swift to run are swiftly dried.

The two ladies had the coupé of the diligence to themselves. Whilst they were enclosed by the straight streets of the town, Jeanne remained immovable in her corner, where she had taken refuge, trembling, frightened, like a bird palpitating in the hands of her captor. But when she was in the open country, and saw the superb panorama that unrolls itself under the walls of Avranches—hills, with their pliant outlines waving softly; laughing fields, clear rivers drawing arabesques through the green dress of the meadows; branches of trees, waving here and there like a plume of feathers, reflecting the blue of the heavens in the blue of the sea, where the wind raises, every moment, the little waves, with their light crests, which are soon dispersed in a crown of light.

Jeanne Derville, who had always lived near nature—I mean with the love of it in her heart—and, therefore, especially alive to its beauty, slid softly from her seat and pressed against the window-pane her young fresh face. The sun which, until this moment, had hidden obstinately in the morning fogs, burst his veil of clouds and threw his glory on awakened nature. Jeanne looked with her whole soul in her eyes, where now there were no more tears. One would say that her interest had swallowed up her sorrow.

"Heaven is good," thought La Marquise. "It consoles her."

They soon reached the first relay. Before the post house there was a great confusion of postillions, horses and boys. The smoking horses were detached and fresh ones replaced them; some travellers got out, others ascended—the conductor scolding everybody a little. Jeanne remained immovable at the door.

"How it interests her! The charm works!" thought Mme. de Boutaric, and she remained quiet.

They started again, the child yet silent.

"There is too much of this," murmured the marquise. "One would say she has become a statue." They entered

into a road enclosed on both sides by large trees and Norman hedges like a wall, which entirely shut out the view.

"It is not the scenery that distracts her now," thought the old lady; and, as she really feared this obstinately prolonged silence, she touched Jeanne lightly.

Jeanne started at the touch as if she had received an electric shock, but did not turn. The marquise forced her to show her face—it was bathed in tears.

"Hum!" said she, softly; "the little one is not so easily consoled as I first thought." And then she added, aloud: "What are you thinking about, little one?"

"Of my father, madame."

How could one reply to that? How desire to stop tears flowing from such a source? The marquise did not try—she let them flow. However, at the end of a few moments she said there must be an end to all things, and drawing the child gently to her she dried the great red eyes. "See, poor little one, that life is one long succession of sorrows, and the only means to soften them is to resign ourselves to the will of God; of God who loves us and sends all these sorrows for our good!"

A village clock, as they were passing, struck ten.

"They are *now* burying my poor father," replied Jeanne, with a sob that tore her breast.

The marquise was much moved. "Ah! you loved him well, my dear child," said she gently; "and I know he loved nothing in the world so much as you. It is then right to obey all his wishes, in order to keep him alive in your dutiful and loving soul. If he were here, he would forbid you to cry as you have done."

"Ah, madame! I would not cry if he were here!"

"He is always here in thought and affection, my poor child. God, who is also a Father, permits him to interest himself still in you. Believe it truly, Jeanne, from the heaven where he now is, he is disturbed about his daughter. He looks at her; he sees her cry—cry too much—and he would say, if she could hear: 'This is not well, Jeanne—you are unreasonable—you give me pain—I expected better of you.'"

"He says always 'thou,' madame," replied the child.

"And he will say 'thou' yet, my child, but on condition that thou wilt be more wise, and that thou wilt cry no more."

Jeanne silently dried her tears with the back of her hand; and with a strength of will that could not have been expected at her age, she subdued her sorrow and listened to all the marquise pleased to say. Words suited to her age, exhortations marked with kind judgment and true practical wisdom.

With all sorts of tender precaution and almost maternal delicacy, Madame de Boutaric showed her the imperative necessity of working hard at her school, in order to support herself in the future.

"It is to you, my little one," she said in conclusion, "to whom will be confided the care of your life. Your life will be what you please to make it. But if you aid yourself, heaven will aid you, and friends will not be wanting. The state, to which your father has been one of the most faithful servants, takes charge of your education. It will raise you as is raised the daughter of a prince. It is for you to acknowledge its goodness, by doing your best to profit by it."

Jeanne's answers, full of tact and natural spirit, showed she understood the real importance of the marquise's words, and wished to profit by her advice.

The journey, long enough, at last came to an end without accident or incident. After having been imprisoned for two days and nights in a rolling box, the two travellers arrived at last in the middle of Paris.

CHAPTER II.

ACCUSTOMED to the deep silence of the country and the profound peace of nature, Jeanne felt singularly bewildered by the noise and tumult of the great city. The incessant movement of the men with their rapid steps, taking the luggage without looking at the persons, frightened her, and she drew near the marquise. Mme. de Boutaric did not give her much time to look around; for, taking her hand, she got into a carriage and was driven to a quiet hotel, where her family usually stayed

In her little back room Jeanne found herself almost as quiet as at the Rosery. The distant noise of vehicles recalled the vague and dying murmurs of the sea on the strand of Mount Saint Michel, which she had so often heard unseen, whilst talking to her father, under the arbor of clematis and jessamine.

The marquise only unpacked a few things, for, as she said to herself, she did not intend indeed "To make long bones in the capital." She breakfasted in great haste with Jeanne, and with all her things at hand for a start afterwards. As she found the child fatigued and pale from the journey, she put her to bed. When she saw her asleep, and as if she herself had also been refreshed by this identical sleep, she started instantly and on foot (in order to bring back her circulation) to the grand chancellor of the Legion of Honor. She asked for M. de Noirlieu, the colonel's friend, who had already been notified of her visit by the almost posthumous letter of Jeanne's unfortunate father.

The marquise was introduced at once to the presence of the second official.

M. Le Baron de Noirlieu was both a warm-hearted and business man. He combined the most noble, devoted feelings with a practical good sense which led him at once to the bottom of affairs. From his first word, the marquise perceived a nature similar to her own, and one with which it would be easy for her to come to an understanding.

They immediately recited the facts of the case. In a few minutes all was settled, Jeanne's papers prepared, requiring only the signature of the grand chancellor. "I will see his excellency at four o'clock, and if madame la marquise will do me the favor to take a modest family dinner with me this evening—'pot-luck,' as the good people say—I will then hand you the admission papers, whilst becoming acquainted with your little protegée."

"It is arranged," said the marquise; "but do not put yourself out of the way, for you will then disoblige me very much. I accept in order to show you the child. I assure you she is charming."

M. de Noirlieu did not live far from their hotel. As the clock struck six, Mme. de Boutaric entered a small apartment, that would have gone bodily into her saloon at Avranches. She was welcomed with a respectful cordial hospitality. Jeanne found some children of her own age, and this made a delight for her. Timid and reserved, as children brought up alone generally are, she was gradually put at her ease by their good manners, gentleness and amiability. The evening seemed short to her, and the marquise saw with pleasure the fresh color come again to her cheeks, whilst brightened by childish sports.

The next morning, Mme. de Boutaric presented herself, with the colonel's daughter, at the gate of the Imperial House of Saint Denis.

CHAPTER III.

SAINT DENIS! What grand, noble remembrances this name alone recalls! And what a happy thought, to give, for an asylum to the daughters of glory, the national patronage, in the shape of this old monastery, which is so intimately united to the origin of the French monarchy! Three dynasties of kings sleep their last sleep under the shadow of these circular arches. The greatest of our past dramas have unrolled their plots in the shadows of *these* cloisters. A monastery before becoming a young ladies' school! The old abbey, ardent centre of religious discipline and human science, throwing a torch of light on the annals of France! The chronicle of Saint Denis is the mother of our history. A few dwellings grouped in the fifth century of the present era, around the tomb of the apostle to the Gauls, were the first nucleus of the city. The remembrance of Genevieve, the shepherdess, whose crook, more powerful than the sword of the Roman emperors, stopped the barbarous triumphant march of Attila—the richness of this poetical reflection brightens the chaste and beautiful countenance of the patroness of Paris.

In the seventh century, Dagobert, of popular renown, founded the Basilic, since then enlarged, revived, repaired so many times.

He called there a number of monks, chosen from the most celebrated convents; and this holy colony—in the mystic garden of the cloister—gathered

the austere flowers which are unfolded under the Benedictine rule.

During the bloody night and the long convulsions of the Dark Ages, Saint Denis, in her blessed peace, preserved all the germs of doctrine and of science ready to burst forth at a more propitious hour.

Abelard, a name dear to women, came there to hide his glory and his sorrows, and that nothing might be wanted for the completeness of her renown, the Thaumaturgy decreed to her the reputation of working miracles, which set the last seal to the celebrity of this religious sanctuary. Rich with honors, possessing immense estates, free from the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Paris, reporting only to the Pope, younger sister of the royal authority, the abbey of Saint Denis might be regarded as the type and model of those grand oases of the Christian world, which open so nobly for the conquered by fate, those without hope in life, or those who have no longer a place amongst men, to wit, those who are eaten up by the zeal of their vocation, or those who are tortured by the remorse of inexpiable faults.

Long centuries passed, during which Saint Denis pursued in peace her noble destiny.

Suddenly, the revolution of 1789, which is called especially "The Revolution," burst on France, on the whole world. Its irresistible hands opened the modern era. Soon, society, travailing with new civilization, felt herself troubled to the centre of her existence; soon the threatening echoes resounded in the peaceable walls of the cloisters. The old monks looked tremblingly at each other and feared the worst evils. Meanwhile, the constituent assembly, imagining they would render men more free by depriving them of certain liberties, abolished, by a first decree, the old monasteries, suppressed religious communities, secularized their members, and confiscated their wealth.

It was thus, forsooth, that they prepared the reign of Liberty, Equality, and of Human Fraternity. But revolutions, in their descent, stop not of themselves. A second decree completed the first. This declared the basilic of Saint Denis to be a parish church, and replaced the monks by a secular clergy.

A little later, quatre-vingt-trieze ('93) lighted her torches and gave the signal of sacreligious profanation. They pillaged the treasury of Saint Denis. They violated the majesty of the royal tombs. The city of the venerable apostle of the Gauls lost half her name, and was called in the new vocabulary, "Denis Franciade!" The decades of the Goddess of Reason, with their grotesque ceremonies, succeeded the pomps and splendors of the Catholic religion. But the fall was not yet deep enough! The church after being a temple—the Temple of Reason—became an artillery depot, next a mountebank theatre, and a foraging magazine. This was not all! They tore down the large glass windows; they broke the architectural ornaments; they melted the sacred vases; they demolished the roofs; and, notwithstanding the word of Him who has said: "My house is a house of prayer," and "Man does not live by bread alone," they erected a hand-mill in the place of the overturned altar.

But evil always perishes by its own excess. The Revolution having destroyed those she called her enemies, had ended, like the ancient Saturn, to whom she is so often compared, by devouring her own children.

Now, however, a powerful restoring hand extends itself already over France. Understanding the disorders of anarchy, it gives to itself the task of reconciling the advances of the modern world with what there was of truth and goodness in the old traditions, the excellency of which had survived so many centuries through the alternations of prosperity and misery.

The Revolution believed it a duty to abolish (as contrary to the principle of equality—her imperious *motto*) all the honorary titles of the ancient chivalry, founded, it is true, for the most part on the aristocratic privilege of birth.

The constituent assembly had commenced by suppressing all exterior marks expressive of distinction of caste, thus perpetuating the antagonism of the races. The Cross of Saint Louis, the highest military decoration, at first was left to the army. But the convention, under the intense pressure of the revolutionary committee, decided that all officers who did not at once resign these insignias of their order to the

municipal authority, by this one act would be suspected. And at that time to be suspected, was a crime which merited death.

Worn out by the bloody convulsions of anarchy, frightened by the excesses of a liberty of which she had tasted only the *bitter* fruits, France took refuge in glory with Bonaparte.

It has been truly said: "If all honorary orders were destroyed, the immortal thought which had created them, transmitted from race to race, from century to century, notwithstanding the proscription, would endure for ever."

Taking what was true in the idea, and appropriating it to the exigencies and needs of the new era, persuaded when one takes from man all their energies and their devotion, it is necessary to make them forget, by glory and distinction, the sacrifices asked of them, he who held in his strong hands the destinies of the modern world, instituted "The Order of the Legion of Honor," founded only on personal merit, and dying with the receiver. It was, as he himself said, "The way to make heroes with a rattle." What difference does the means make, provided the end is gained? At first all were astonished, and in certain saloons where the remains of the old clubs were gathered, they ridiculed the new institution. Some old Republicans, whose prejudices far surpassed their intelligence, grumbled to themselves. But soon this creation of the First Consul was received with great favor, and surrounded him with an irresistible prestige. One felt happy to die for an *end of ribbon*. Was not this the triumph of ideas over reality? of spirit over matter? of the soul over the body?

In those times of heroic exploits, it was chiefly from the midst of the *ranks* of the army, that the Legion of Honor recruited her glorious battalion.

But death mowed each day among the braves. Many young orphans whose fathers had fallen in battle, called for, and merited the care of the state. An education, strong, serious, brilliant, fitting them for the most humble and the highest spheres—such was the portion offered by France to the daughters of those who had died for her sake.

The 4th of December 1805, at Schoenbrunn, in the palace of the conquered, in the midst of the joys and sorrows following the victory of Austerlitz, bought with the price of generous blood, Napoleon, Emperor, signed the first of the numerous decrees sent to him in behalf of the orphan daughters of the Legion.

This first decree opened to them three houses that they could not enter before seven nor after ten years of age; each house capable of accommodating one hundred scholars.

In 1810, six years later (and during these six years, sword and fire had often thinned the Legion's ranks, soon reformed from the regiment) they doubled the number of educational houses destined for the daughters.

These houses were intended to receive not only the daughters of the dead, but also those whose fathers were called out of France in the service of their country. The pupils were taught to read, to write, to count, and all the duties and accomplishments of their sex. They had a useful profession placed before them, and they could thus acquire independence, which is often for a woman the greatest safeguard of her dignity.

The ladies of the congregation of the Mère de Dieu were placed in charge of the institution of the Legion of Honor.

St. Denis consisted of six houses designated by the Emperor; and the Legion of Honor was put in possession of it, as they had already been of the ancient abbey, then organized into a military hospital. It was immediately filled with the daughters and young sisters of the generals and marshals of the Empire. Napoleon favored Saint Denis. Hortense, Queen of Holland, his dear adopted daughter, was made its enlightened protectress. They decided that scholars should not leave before eighteen, nor remain after twenty years of age. They desired the scholars should be old enough to receive the finishing touches of their education, and yet young enough to seize all the chances of happiness that life offers them.

The interior organization of the house was arranged on a grand plan. Six dignitaries; six ladies of the first class and twenty dames of the second class, were placed under the higher orders of a superintendent of the administration and instruction. The ladies were obliged to sign

engagements for ten years, which were renewed for an equal period when they passed from one class to another. The dignitaries engaged for their whole life. The seclusion imposed at first only on the ladies, extended soon to the dignitaries. The *right* of entering into the house belonged only to the chief of the state, to the princes and princesses of the blood, to the grand dignitaries of the Empire, to the Grand Almoner, to the Archbishop of Paris, and to the Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honor.

The ritual of the chapel admitted the solemn glory of the Catholic worship.

We must narrate of all—even, alas! of the dead! Death, so mournful in infancy and youth! We then weep for those who ought to weep for us. A dark enclosure was reserved in the interior of the Abbey for death's victims—where they can repose in eternal peace before experiencing the trials of the world and the weariness of life. One day in the year was devoted to their loved memory, and taught those yet full of life and their hopes of the future, to celebrate the Feast of the Dead.

They did not fix the epoch of this touching ceremony in the gloomy season—when the days are bad and the leaves fall, as if to warn us that we shall fall like them—but, on the contrary, they celebrate the feast of the youthful dead in the smiling month of flowers; in the midst of the blooming joys of reawakened nature. At a time in June, most lovely of months, which sees spring finished and summer commencing, throwing over all her sweetness and her joyousness; when the birds sing in all the trees; when the earth appears embelished in order to celebrate the ever-eternal renewal which perpetuates existence—the pupils of Saint Denis ought to pray on the grassy tombs of those who were no more!

In April, 1814, when the hour of terrible reverses had already sounded for France, when she felt herself exhausted of gold as well as blood, the two great houses of the Legion of Honor were united into one—Saint Denis absorbed Ecouer, the last inheritance of her daughter. Soon the Empire foundered in the gulf of Waterloo, and the prodigious elevation of the Man of Destiny seemed to have been designed only the better to measure his downfall. The counter revolution conquered the Revolution; the old ideas became again the mistress of the world.

The Restoration, which more than once tried to efface all vestiges of the Empire, had nevertheless the wisdom to preserve the institution of Saint Denis. It established for the dignitaries and the ladies a decoration resembling the cross of the noble chapters, and of which the ribbon resembled that of the Legion of Honor. Some wore them like a cross; others had only a rosette. The last class were contented with a simple chevalier's knot. The superintendent alone had the ribbon of the Grand Cross. Fifteen grand chancellors of the Legion of Honor and five superintendents had administered since its foundation, to the imperial house of Saint Denis, and caused her to pass securely, flourishing and entire, through the last five years of our history—years, fertile in troubles, full of catastrophes and ruins.

CHAPTER IV.

DURING this lengthy digression, which is not entirely useless, but which we ask the reader to pardon, we have left Jeanne and her noble protectress standing before the iron gate of Saint Denis. Having stated the object of her visit, the marquise was shown into the presence of a young nun, who asked her name and then went to her superior for orders. She soon returned and showed the strangers into a reception room, furnished with austere carefulness, where a lady of mature years awaited them. Her simple dignified manners contrasted singularly with those of the marquise; whilst her benign and maternal aspect reassured our little friend. Jeanne had passed through the vast streets, examining everything with astonishment and fear. She felt taken by the sincere goodness children recognise so quickly, and in which they are so seldom deceived.

The marquise and the superintendent, (for it was that high dignitary of Saint Denis who was before the strangers,) at once understood each other, and found they could settle things as women of the world—as equals. Whilst the child

looked at the great red ribbon, placed in the form of a cross on the black robe of the superintendent, Mme. de Boutaric handed her the papers and explained the position and misfortunes of Jeanne's family.

"We have several pupils in the same position," replied the superintendent.

"The most noble families are often the poorest. In surrounding these young girls with our devoted care, we pay to them the debt the country has contracted with their fathers. Your little Jeanne will find here, madame, both mother and sisters." Whilst speaking, the superintendent fixed on the child's countenance her remarkably clear eye, as if she wished to penetrate her, to understand her and to know beforehand her aptitude, her inclinations, and her tastes. She then gave the marquise a look that showed she was pleased with the child, and said, "Now, madame la marquise, this sweet little girl belongs to us. You can leave her in our care."

Jeanne, at these words, turned her great brown eyes, full of barely-restrained tears, towards the marquise. "Alas!" thought she, "my whole life is passed saying farewell to some one." Three days ago she feared the marquise, her brusque words, her frigid manner. But this apparently grand lady, so stern and so haughty, had been good to her—had shown her sympathy and interest. Poor Jeanne, who wished only to love, became quickly attached to her; and now, when quitting her, felt a deep, vivid sorrow. Jeanne did not deceive herself, it was a new and final separation with all that recalled the past.

The superintendent understood these natural feelings—she pitied this young sincere sorrow. "To-morrow is Sunday," said she; "and as we celebrate one of our chief religious solemnities, the feast of the Holy Sacrament, we have no work done here. Would it please you, madame, if I allow Mademoiselle Derville to pass another day with you?"

Jeanne *looked* such a strong *yes*, that the marquise dared not say *no*.

"If you would like to partake of our feast, mademoiselle can see her future companions, and you will know how we teach our young people to honor God." It was hard to refuse. The marquise accepted, saying to herself, it was only one day longer at Saint Denis, and she could not, therefore, refuse so slight a favor to the poor orphan.

Saint Denis is an important subprefecture, but does not offer in itself a very varied or agreeable programme of amusements for a young girl, and Madame de Boutaric had not imagination enough to suggest any.

An obliging cicerone, who waited on them, offered to show the abbey and subterraneous chapel; where they would see the tombs of the kings.

"That will help us to pass away one or two hours," thought the marquise, looking at Jeanne, "without which I do not see how we will kill this day."

However interesting, grand, and majestic the dark tombs of the Merovingians, the Carlovingians, and the Capetians may be, they offer no particular recreation for a little girl nine years old. Let us add, that Jeanne did not even know the names of the great men, more or less great, of whom they spoke to her, and the tombs of these people, so foreign to all her thoughts, were subjects of profound indifference.

She walked behind, following, with unequal steps and wandering eye, whilst Madame de Boutaric, whose national fibre the history of France always inflamed, stopped before the tombs of her *chosen heroes*, and from the depths of her pious soul commended them to God, by a rapid but fervent invocation—passing proudly before the crowns of the deceased who had not the honor to excite her sympathy.

The three races, joining together, endeavored to make Jeanne's morning pass more quickly. But this journey among the dead grieved the child. Seeing these tombs, she thought of the one that was opened in the rustic cemetery of the little Norman village. She felt a sensation of freedom on reaching the open air, and as she left the church, she looked with less fear on the house, which in two days would enclose, for so long a time, her youth and liberty.

There, at least, thought she, I will find some living persons.

The marquise engaged two rooms at the hotel in the neighborhood, and fatigued by her walks, worn out by the heat, so much greater in the flat of Saint Denis than on the shore of La

Manche, where the sea-breeze tempers the intense heat of summer. Entirely disconcerted by this unaccustomed life, she shut herself up for the remainder of the day.

She had taken the precaution to bring in her bag her woollen knitting and her long needles, which seldom left her. She set at once to work without again raising her eyes, as if her dinner depended absolutely on the number of stitches she made. She had given Jeanne so much advice and so many exhortations that she had not the conscience to add any more. Besides, she was contented, for this dear marquise was not foolish, to exchange with Jeanne, now and then, *some* monosyllables.

The colonel's daughter found an illustrated book on the table—dear to those from whom literature keeps, yet, its secrets, and which can be run over with the thumb. She then stationed herself near the window. But her looks wandered from the pictures, and tried to pierce the dark high walls which would so soon shelter her young life.

What thoughts agitated this young mind, who can tell? But by the grave sad expression of her face it was easy to guess that they were very serious ones.

Jeanne conjured not yet, she could not conjure, the enigma of her destiny. But her precocious intelligence made her already feel that it would be a formidable enigma for her.

The afternoon, in such a tête-à-tête, was not lively, and the time seemed to pass very slowly.

Under the pretext that she must rise early the next morning, Madame de Boutaric, always systematic, sent her early to bed. Jeanne shut her great eyes, and dreamed—a little of Pharamond, of Clovis, and of Chilperic, and a great deal of madame the superintendent.

Next morning, at the time appointed, the marquise presented herself at the gate. Neither she nor Jeanne would have recognised the house. Last evening it had seemed austere and sad, now it appeared smiling and adorned as the asylum of happiness. Flowers everywhere. Joy on every face. In a distant balcony they saw a garland of curious heads, unable to approach, but regarding them from afar.

A young overseer waited on the marquise, and conducted them with rapid steps to the entrance of the vast park where the scholars walked and played.

Opposite the door, arranged with the best regard to the perspective, they saw a magnificent altar, of simple architecture, as these monuments of a day ought always to be, but ornamented with exquisite taste and natural elegance. Such taste and elegance as *women* can always employ, to embellish the objects of their worship, divine or human. What *artist* could ever equal them in adorning a bed-chamber or a chapel?

White draperies were gracefully arranged around four pillars supporting a canopy shading the improvised altar, on which the *Host* was to be placed. Twelve ribbons of the different shades of the twelve divisions—among which are distributed the scholars of Saint Denis—float in the wind, and with their variegated colors, show brightly and gayly on the whiteness of all around. Garlands of flowers hang from the canopy, twine around the pillars, and design on the front of the altar, in the midst of a thousand sacred emblems, the monograms of Jesus and Mary.

The long walk through which the procession was to pass was covered with leaves and branches. Here and there a bow of ribbon fastened to a tree indicated the course that the King of Heaven and of Earth was to take in the midst of his children. The park of Saint Denis, usually beautifully majestic, now resembled fairy land.

Jeanne, at the age of quick emotions, was enraptured. She was under a charm which beamed from her countenance and gave her a singular brightness.

"Oh, indeed!" thought the Marquise, "she is very beautiful."

No one here had thought of asking whether Jeanne was beautiful? They only noticed she had large brown eyes, soft and bright, a frank manner which pleased every one, and an expression of lively, deep feeling. There were, indeed, those who said her mouth was too large; but they were forced to add that her lips were red and her teeth white, and

that her smile of penetrating goodness brightened all, or, to express ourselves more clearly, illuminated her nervous paleness as a ray of sun illuminates a landscape, and causes it to shine with glory.

She was entering that age so well named the " ungainly age" of girlhood; where thinness gives too much sharpness to the cheek bones; but the pure outlines and the fine contour of her delicate form were not altered, and in what she was, one could easily see what she would be in later years.

The good marquise, whose æsthetic opinions had formed themselves more than once into this indulgent maxim, "Any one is beautiful who has all his members," could not see so far. Jeanne, in her eyes, was just like all other children—nothing more. And it therefore must have been a singularly bright look to snatch from the good lady the sudden exclamation we have quoted above.

Soon the aerial tones of two silver clocks announced that the procession quitted the chapel. Five minutes later they saw appear, in a double line, the cortege of scholars and of ladies advancing slowly in an imposing manner. Heading the brilliant *theorie*, a banner, with bright colors, displayed the image of the Virgin raised above all. This banner was borne by a young girl surrounded by four companions, who held the tassels, suspended by long watered ribbons. Long white veils covered these young girls from head to foot. A crown of roses on their foreheads under the veils, which were transparent enough to allow their beautiful hair to be distinctly seen. The cross came next. It was borne by a sacristan; for it was large, strong, and heavy. Two young girls walked on either side, crowned with sweet scented honeysuckles, and carrying candles almost as tall as themselves.

A short distance from this group came a swarm of children, chosen from the youngest and prettiest in the house. This innocent battalion kept the order of march as strictly as their older companions. They were crowned with corn flowers, and carried baskets filled with roses, suspended from their necks, resting on their chests. From time to time, at a signal from the mistress of ceremonies, all turned, and filling their hands from their baskets, strewed their sweet branches under the steps of Him who causes the corn and flowers to grow. As this rain of roses fell on the earth a cloud of incense arose mounting towards Heaven.

Four scholars, with red girdles bounded with white, and crowned with field flowers, swung their burning censers with skilful grace—making one dream of the cherubim, seen on high by the entranced prophets, whose whole eternity passes in burning sweet odors before the throne of the Almighty. Five other young girls represent the Virgins of the Gospel—the *Wise* Virgins—(often heard about!) They were chosen, after great deliberation, from the most beautiful in the school, and were crowned with white roses and jasamine. They walked directly before the canopy, which was carried by eight scholars with white girdles, escorted by eight others holding the strings. On the right and left, in a double file, marched the singers, veiled like their companions, but without crowns; and whose young fresh voices sung the poetic and touching notes of the church's hymns.

Words cannot portray the impression of such a sight. Nothing is so beautiful as pure, believing, religious youth! All these pretty faces with their attractive freshness, whose feelings beam forth in such joyous rays! All these white veils draped with exquisite art; these crowns of flowers of ingeniously varied colors; this floating banner, and those roses thrown around; this mystic vapor of incense, whose spiral column mounts slowly into the air; the harmonious chants; the long thread of young scholars unrolling in the beautiful walks of the park, with their robes of immaculate whiteness, showing so distinctly on the rich green of the trees and grass; the splendors of a summer sky—(so deep and so blue one might call it an ocean of blue); the radiant sun adding a fresher brightness to the feast, all combined to make this day stand unsurpassed in its grandeur and beauty. Its remembrance never faded from Jeanne Derville's soul. The procession advancing with that solemn slowness which enhances the majesty of all religious splendors, reached at last the foot of the altar. Whilst the priest ascended the

altar, raising in his hands the monstrance of gold containing the host, all the young performers in this sacred drama, placed themselves around, forming the most beautiful groups. The Holy Virgins, the Thuriferaries, the Canephores, with the baskets of roses, the candlestick bearers, and those who carried nothing, were all placed in the best position to add to the whole effect of this charming living picture.

There was a moment of deep silence. Then, in the midst of the general gathering (whilst fell the rain of perfumed roses, whilst forth breathed the incense, and whilst two doves—until then with invisible threads kept captive—took their flight towards heaven), the priest blessed the whole institution, and invoked for it the protection from on high! Then the cortege re-formed its ranks, and returned in the same order as it came.

Mme. de Boutaric followed at a distance, holding Jeanne's hand. The colonel's daughter moved charmed, imagining herself already one of the scholars, and thinking that next year she would play her part in the ceremony, lost the instinctive fear she was first oppressed by, and already longed for the morrow.

That evening the marquise embraced Jeanne as tenderly as she could, and gave her in charge of a sister, who led her away to sleep in a grand dormitory, where there were already many young girls whom she remembered seeing in the park and chapel. These looked curiously and maliciously at the newcomer. Jeanne did not, in truth, pay them much attention, for she had never before undressed herself, and was much engrossed by the troublesome buttons and pins which are so absolutely essential to all female costumes.

The sister, knowing all here had to serve the same apprenticeship, left her to search and find as she might. Jeanne did search and find. Our little friend, unaccustomed to the rules of the house, was astonished to see so many young girls in one room without speaking. But she soon saw that if their lips were mute, their hands were not inactive; their fingers flew with great rapidity from their forehead to their eyes, their mouth, their ears, and, by never-ending process, they made the silent letters of a mysterious alphabet. Jeanne soon saw she was the subject of these telegraphic signs, and felt a sensation of unknown anger. She also resolved, as soon as she met with a willing teacher, to commence her education by the study of this indispensable language. But the eyes of the sister left Jeanne, for their accustomed surveillance, and this aerial conversation was interrupted. The hands returned to their duty, and became as mute as the tongues themselves. The sensation caused by the arrival of the "new one," as they called Jeanne Derville at present, for want of more definite information, quieted, and, as it had been a very fatiguing day, sleep soon conquered all those little white beds. Jeanne followed suit a little after the others, on account of her troubled feelings; but she nevertheless ended by sleeping soundly.

CHAPTER V.

THE next day a clock, placed so near the dormitory that she thought it struck at the head of her bed, awoke Jeanne with a start. At the first stroke all the scholars jumped from their beds in the same silence which had so much surprised Jeanne the previous evening. They dressed with an ease and rapidity which Jeanne felt she could never hope to equal. She saw she ought to do as the rest, and in a moment she was on her feet. But she was greatly surprised not to find her clothes on the chair where she had placed them the previous evening. They were gone. At this moment the sister drew near and said, in a low tone, "You can remain a little longer in bed; they are finishing your clothes, and will bring them as soon as the young ladies have risen."

Ten minutes later all the nests were empty, all the birds flown. The sister then returned with a seamstress, who brought the entire costume for the novice.

The uniform of Saint Denis is not exactly coquettish! and there is nothing in it to encourage the taste for dress, which is so natural, they say, to the most beautiful half of the human race. If Jeanne expected to find some of the things she admired yesterday, she must have been bitterly disappointed. No more long white veils, waving the

whole length of the graceful figures! no more crowns of flowers scenting the curly hair! but a robe of black stuff, cut in such a way that its stern simplicity could not be altered by the personal elegance of the one who wore it. For head-dress, a plain white hat, trimmed with an almost imperceptible piece of black velvet. Frightful hat, which had the gift of making the most beautiful hideous; and that one is condemned, yet more awful thought! to wear always, in the chapel, during play, and at the table! Horrible! To eat in a hat! For shoes—shoes made out of coarse hide-skin! showing a vulgar, common, blue stocking.

Nothing, in fact, that belongs to luxury or elegance; necessaries, strict necessaries, and nothing, absolutely nothing more! I am mistaken—there is a little turned-down collar, the width of two fingers, and a belt, whose bright colors shone forth on the dark robe; but this girdle is not an ornament; it is a sign, whose skilfully-combined shades show at a glance to which division the scholar belongs. One can see that the details of this costume are dark enough to suit the austereness of all around.

Jeanne dressed herself more rapidly and less awkwardly than one could expect in a little girl who had never before helped herself. All went well. There were no serious difficulties till she was going to dress her hair. The free child of Nature had always allowed her beautiful brown hair to fall around her head and neck in soft, waving ringlets. "The rules of the house will not allow these curls," said the sister. "You must smooth your hair, mademoiselle. All your companions wear smooth hair."

"But that is impossible, mademoiselle; mine will curl, in spite of myself!"

"Oh! is that all? We can soon remedy that!"

The strict observer of discipline tried her best to smooth Jeanne's hair, which continually escaped from her hands, rebellious and flowing, rising in little waves under her very fingers. She at last succeeded in gathering and fastening them smooth on the child's head. Jeanne resisted no more, except to put her hand on her forehead or ears, with the involuntary gesture one makes when they are hurt. "It is better already,' said the sister, looking at her masterpiece with a satisfied air. "Now for the hat!"

"Why? Do we go out so soon?"

"No, my child; but here we wear the hat all the time. It is the *rule*."

Jeanne lowered her head without a word. Jeanne's hair was beautiful; the hat was ugly. The child was annoyed, but she did not wish to show it, and quietly allowed herself to be muffled up in the uniform hat.

"All is well arranged," said the sister; "now we can go down." She stepped back to survey the whole effect of the toilet, and then approached her quickly—

"What have you in your ears?"

"A pair of ear-rings, always worn by my mother, and given me by my father, in remembrance of her."

"I understand. You must value them very highly. They will certainly be returned to you some day. But here you cannot wear jewelry. It is against the rules." And Madame Argèles—for this was the sister's name—unfastened the first ear-ring with a sleight-of-hand worthy of a goldsmith.

"Alas!" said Jeanne, with a suffocating heart, "I have always worn them."

"You were never at St. Denis before, my child."

Jeanne saw she must submit with a good grace; so she unfastened the other ear-ring, and handed it to Mme. Argèles.

"It is perfect!" said she; "I see you are a good little woman, and we will love each other well—don't you think so?"

"Yes, madame."

The sister took the two very simple ear-rings—only a little black enamel on a gold ground—and folded them in a paper, on which she wrote the name of Jeanne Derville, saying, "They will be returned to you when you leave here."

"In ten years!" thought Jeanne, who could not suppress a sigh.

Now the toilet was really completed. The "new one" glanced at a little glass, big as a hand, that hung at the head of the bed; she saw that she was ugly, and fearful to behold—as if one could be ugly with this budding youth, with this freshness and brightness of spring-time,

which nature places on the face of a young girl in her first season. To speak the truth, the costume does not in the least enhance the natural graces of the individual. Instead of brightening, it seems to hide them. If any scholar left Saint Denis with ideas of coquetry and luxury, one could say it was a fatal gift brought from without—the evil fruit—too well grafted by a former teaching, which the institution endeavors not to ripen. It was a useless care; there are some long-lived plants which spread of themselves, grow and flourish without culture. There are also some charming creatures, daughters of Eve by the apple—even without the serpent—who would be coquettes in the midst of a desert.

The toilet completed, Mme. Argèles, crossing the long halls and endless corridors, led Jeanne into the study of the inspector of lessons, whose duty it was to examine (as they say in university parlance), and decide to which division she could belong. She introduced Jeanne, and left her alone with this stranger. Like all timid children, Jeanne had a natural fear of strange faces; and yet, such a need of loving some one, that she felt to the nun as she had felt to Mme. de Boutaric. She thought she had commenced to love her, and regretted her departure. The strange inspector frightened her.

Mme. d'Anglade—that was her name—was writing, and did not even raise her head. When Mme. Argèles introduced Jeanne, she merely made a sign of dismissal, and continued her work, without taking any more notice of the child. Jeanne, seated on the edge of her chair, looked curiously around. There were many books in this study, and high book-cases filled with boxes; there was also an orrery on the end of the table, showing the harmonious movements of the great bodies which God has placed in space.

Jeanne could not have told exactly what *was* there; she looked without seeing, or she saw without understanding.

The large maps in relief on the walls, with their snow-clad mountains, their green forests, their blue rivers, astonished her; but she looked in vain among this austere furniture for the familiar and charming things which give the grace of a home, and with which her father had surrounded her in the delicious retreat of the Rosery.

On finishing this examination, she looked at the lady, who was writing all the time very rapidly, and with a scratching pen. Suddenly the lady pushed away her paper, drew her black leather chair from the table, leaned her elbows on the arms and looked at the child.

"Is it you who are called Jeanne Derville?"

"Yes, madame."

"How old are you?"

"Nine and a half years old."

"Nine years and a half! You are very large! If you are as learned as you are tall, you will at once enter into the class of violet uniforms, which they do not generally enter before ten. I will examine you!"

Jeanne, who had, alas! good reason for being modest, was seized with a nervous tremor and became very pale. She coughed a little, to reassure herself. We must confess that Mme. d'Anglade's appearance was not calculated to set a young scholar at her ease. In all respects a most admirable person, and whose strict impartiality was appreciated by every one, she was a little thin woman, with such yellow skin that a malicious scholar had nicknamed her "Madame la Jaundice." The word was so applicable that it immortalized the young girl, and was settled firmly on madame. She had such a queer little body that it is hardly *worth* describing. Her face was thin, long and withered, with a pinched nose, a projecting forehead; her head covered with thick gray hair; small eyes, of an uncertain hue, which seemed to pierce the soul.

On examining Jeanne, the inspector soon saw that her education had, unhappily, been seriously neglected.

"You do not know enough to join the violet uniform—let us see how it will be with the violet and white!"

She asked her some still easier questions; but the child could give only very imperfect replies.

"What! you cannot even join the violet-bordered class!" said the inspector, overpowered by the monstrosity of this unexpected result. "My dear child, what are you capable of? What do you know?"

"I can garden a little, and I know how to fish for shrimps," replied Jeanne, with such artlessness that the heart of the superintendent might have been touched. The inspectress's heart was moved; she answered, with a slight smile, "The shrimps come to Saint Denis already caught—when they do come—and as to your gardening, it is an agreeable employment in the country, but not of much use here, where we do not permit any child to have flowers, as it might pain those who could not get them! You at least know how to read?"

"Oh, yes! madame," said Jeanne, with a blush.

"And to write?"

Here the reply was not very distinct, and Mme. d'Anglade was forced to repeat the question.

"I write a little—pretty well."

"Oh! if you write only a little, it is not enough for a big girl nearly ten years old; I will, however, place you in the green uniform. Come near the table." Jeanne did so, and the inspectress handed her pen and paper.

"The paper is not ruled, madame," said the child, with unaffected fright.

"Write, nevertheless, what I dictate."

Jeanne wrote; but her letters were so indistinct and badly formed, and her spelling of such a fantastic nature, that it was worthy the ladies of the past century, who talked so well that it was not necessary for them to know how to write.

The inspectress took the paper, and, on reading the first line, threw back her head and projected her under-lip in a significant manner. "Well, my dear little one, it must certainly be the green-bordered division; and even in this class, though it is the lowest in the school, you cannot take the first place. Your education has been more neglected than I can tell you, and you must have much courage and willingness to regain the lost time. Do you truly intend to work?"

"Oh, yes, madame; I feel I must."

The inspectress struck a bell, and Madame Argèles reappeared.

"Bordered-green!" said the inspectress, who had recommenced her work.

Madame Argèles shrugged her shoulders, as if she could hardly give vent to her surprise. She, however, brought the designated girdle, and fastened it around Jeanne's waist.

"My child," said the superintendent, "you are two years backward for your age. We have twelve divisions, and I am obliged to place you for a time at least in the lowest of all, with children only eight years old. But this must not discourage you. I see you are bright, and I hope you are willing and courageous. It is necessary that you should pass through the first classes of the course, in order soon to join the young girls of your own age. The time this takes will depend upon yourself. It is usual for the pupils to remain six months in each division; but I will consider your peculiar situation, and each time you are capable of advancement, I will give the necessary authorization. Now, my child, you may go."

Madame Argèles led Jeanne into the school-room of the twelfth division, where they all wore the green girdle bound with white.

As the inspectress had told our heroine, this division was composed of the youngest children in the school. Here, Jeanne, who was much older, and very large for her age, seemed entirely out of place.

She was ashamed of this contrast, that must strike every one; and, with this shame, another feeling soon mingled. Friendship, which requires equality in friends, requires also equality of age. Two years' difference, in some periods of life, creates a gulf it is difficult to pass. Neither the ideas, tastes, nor abilities, are the same; there is no point of contact; nothing in common in their whole existence.

CHAPTER VI.

JEANNE, in the midst of her new companions, was almost as much alone as at the Rosery. What do I say? At the Rosery she was always with the best and most tender of fathers, and she enjoyed with him the sweet intercourse which nothing could now replace. Having nothing better to do, she tried to console herself by work. She worked much and worked well, with a success that astonished her mistress. She burnt the routine, and doubled the studies.

By the time she was twelve, she had made up her lost time, and entered the red-belted class, with the girls of her

own age. From this time she commenced a new life.

She had passed the line below which work is a drudgery and tasks a vexation. To learn, was now a pleasure for her. Her young intellect bounded towards the new and unknown horizon which opened before her. She devoured books and drank the words that fell from the lips of her teachers. Her mind, which had not been forced by early work, seized everything with a wonderful facility; and her memory, sure and faithful, retained all that was confided to it. She succeeded in everything. It was very seldom that she was without a medal of honor on her neck. At the solemn distributions at the end of the year, she obtained the most beautiful crowns. One could already foresee that the day would come when the House of Saint Denis would cite her as an example of what they could accomplish, and show her as a specimen of the education they were capable of giving.

She was not contented with acquiring only what is called education. Her fairy fingers excelled in all the fancy works which are the specialty of women. Neither did she neglect the accomplishments which they teach at the Saint Denis with as much zeal and care as in the first schools in the world. She sketched a Greek nose from a bust with a sure and rapid pencil, and painted in water colors as the young English girls for whom they were first made. But it was easy to see, from the first, that music would be her triumph. Others might show themselves more skilful, executing complicated pieces; there were others with more liveliness and flexibility of voice; but no person understood better than she that music is the language of emotion, and that it must speak to the heart before all. Indeed, whether she played or sang, she saw in the notes only melodious accents by which she could express the treasures of a deep and true feeling. Every one in the House was satisfied with her except herself. She never truly believed she had attained the end. She worked with an ardor which became dangerous. They thought it necessary to moderate her zeal. Her health did not suffer, however. She was in every respect a brave nature. Her beauty, slow in developing, did not seem of that kind which rules over and fascinates the multitude; but she could not be looked upon with indifference by any man susceptible to the charms of grace and of distinction. An expression, by turns lively and pensive, replaced with her that classical beauty, more and more rare in real life, which the chisel of the sculptors, and the brush of the painters, strive to give to the forms that they make to start from the marble or live upon canvas—and how exquisite the details of this her fine noble physiognomy!

Her color, as pale as that of a white rose, but flushing under the least emotion with the rich blood of youth, was of an ideal transparency and freshness. Her eyes, of an orange-brown, sometimes appearing black, and sometimes seeming shot with a ray of gold, gave to her face a strange brightness, heightened by the purity of a forehead that nature had modelled with love and stamped with intelligence. Add to all, the gift, as precious as it is rare, of naturally exciting the sympathy of all the world and making one's self loved, and you will readily understand that Jeanne was as great a favorite with her mistresses as with her school-mates.

She had insensibly reached the age when the soul of the young girl needs to overflow in tenderness, and prelude love by friendship. Friendship, that feeling so sweet and pure in the springtime of life, when nothing alters or corrupts her noble disinterestedness, Jeanne experienced in its highest form of exaltation.

From the midst of all the affections she had won, she chose (from a hundred others) a friend of her heart; for whom she was all, even as this friend was all to her. The two were only one—they were so inseparable. One saw them always together; like the beautiful couples of the tropical birds, which fly as brothers, always in the same blue cloud, rest on the same branches, pick the same fruit, and sleep on the same twig. They partook of the same plays and the same studies.

This joy of friendship was truly the greatest happiness the poor orphan had yet felt. She was too young, when her mother died, to feel the full value of her tenderness. Later, the sadness of her father, though it did not alter his perfect

goodness, had clouded the charm of Jeanne's intercourse with him. And besides, who, alas! does not know that children are such dear ungrateful beings? Whilst their affection fills all our desires, it is very rare that ours will suffice for them. It always feels the need of escaping to some other.

True affection, reciprocated affection, which recognises itself, and relishes its own happiness, was revealed to Jeanne, only at the moment when she met her friend, the friend of her choice, Victorine de Blanchelande. They were of the same age, both fifteen; they entered life hand in hand. Victorine de Blanchelande, alongside of her friend Jeanne Derville, showed this union of opposites, from which, we are assured, grows the perfect harmony of the whole group. Blonde, a little darling, lovely and gay, Victorine sparkled like the fire, and spread around her the sparks of an original spirit. She threw out, abundantly, everywhere, and at all risks, the excessive fullness of an exuberant nature; whilst Jeanne, more calm, more serious, sometimes more pensive, had something timid and reserved in her ways. But these differences between them made a complete whole, and made them love each other more. This affection had the most happy influence on Jeanne Derville. Friendship supplied all her needs, and made her sometimes forget she was without family. Victorine, on her side, showed all the kind attentions and delicacy of true feelings. She allowed no occasion of proving her affection to escape. Thursday was, for Jeanne, the saddest day of the week, for the scholars were then called into the parlor during the recreation hours to receive the visits of their relatives. At this time, plays were abandoned, and the walks almost deserted.

Jeanne never felt her isolation more; never did her loneliness seem more bitter: never did she feel, more than then, the value of Mlle. de Blanchelande's friendship. Jeanne was somewhat too exclusive, as passionate natures will be everywhere; her engrossing affection for Victorine had rendered her, little by little, insensible of the affection she might have won from her other companions. She asked nothing from them, and charmed all who had intercourse with her. Without caring for what she could receive from them, her reciprocity was only a graceful indifference. In this respect, she was already a woman of the world.

Whilst her friend was in the parlor, she remained waiting for her, generally alone.

Once or twice, in rejoining her, Victorine saw the tears in her big brown eyes. She did not have to ask the cause; she understood it. Afterwards, under one pretext or another, she always found means to end, before all the other pupils, her visits to the parlor.

Yes, indeed, and notwithstanding the visitor was her mother. But the young girl felt she would give so much pleasure to the poor orphan by approaching her a few moments before she was expected.

"Why do you always return first from the parlor?" asked Jeanne, one Thursday, when she had been alone a shorter time than usual.

"Ah!" replied the other, "if thou canst not guess, thou art only stupid or ungrateful. That will give my mother pain enough."

Jeanne threw her arms round her neck, saying, "Thanks! I dared not think thus. Thou art too good. But thou must do so no more. I will try and be reasonable."

"Thou canst not! Since thou lovest me."

CHAPTER VII.

MLLE. DE BLANCHELANDE was not a poor orphan, like her friend. She belonged, on the contrary, to a rich and influential family. Her mother, Mme. la Baronne de Blanchelande, who sent for her each week to come to the parlor, was a woman of the world, of fashionable life, and of large connections. After having embraced her daughter, listened to her chatting for a little while, ascertained she was well, and had all she required, Madame de Blanchelande asked nothing better than to take her flight and return to the streets of Paris. She was at last, however, astonished to see the little ruses that the daughter employed to shorten, more and more, the length of the interview.

"Remain a little longer," said she, at

last, on a certain Thursday, when Victorine seemed in greater haste than usual. "I will be happy to do so, mamma." The young girl made a little face, which passed for pleasure, and reseated herself. Then in a few moments she arose again, saying, "Good-morning, mamma; I am going now!"

"Oh, go then, my beauty, since the parlor burns thy feet! Only I would like to know what thus draws thee from me?"

"Mamma, I go to see Jeanne."

"Who is this Jeanne, if you please? And what attraction has she which prevents your remaining in the parlor until the hour of closing, as do all your little comrades?"

"Oh! it is true, mamma, you do not know Jeanne! Ah, well! Jeanne is Mlle. Derville!"

"I do not know Mlle. Derville any more than Mlle. Jeanne."

"Jeanne, mamma, is my friend! See, she loves only me, and I love only her in the institution; and when I am in the parlor she mourns so much; so much that it pains me! You see, I must go! Good-bye, mamma!"

"Go, my child, since thou lovest thy friend more than thy mother!"

"Oh, mamma, you must not say that! I love you so much! but you are not alone as this poor Jeanne, and I am very sure you are not as unhappy as she is when I am not there!"

"Then go comfort thy Jeanne."

"Yes, mamma; I thank you, mamma!"

Mme. de Blanchelande kissed the eyes of Victorine, and permitted her to go. The little girl flew like a bird.

But the baroness, instead of getting into her carriage and hastening to Paris, asked to see one of the ladies that she knew, and to whose care she had often recommended her little girl.

"It seems," said she, commencing, "that Victorine has taken (I know not why) a great passion for one of her companions whose name, I believe, is Jeanne Derville. Will you tell me truly, dear madame, what this little one may be? It is well, at least, that I should know my daughter's friend."

"Jeanne Derville, madame, is the best and most charming of all we have here: a true pearl, pretty as love, sweet as an angel, sprightly as a goblin; the greatest worker, who knows already as much as her teachers. She loves Victorine, and I am delighted with this for your daughter's sake. Friendship is a great thing in life—a still greater thing, perhaps, at the age of these children, who know no other sentiment. If it is Victorine who has chosen her she has shown great discrimination; if it is she who has chosen Victorine, Victorine has done well in allowing herself to be chosen. Mlle. de Blanchelande has a good heart. I do not give her great credit for that—she gets it from you; but I must add, she joins to that a mischievous little head, for which she is indebted to herself."

"And her father, dear madame, I pray that you will not forget her father!"

"That may be," replied the other, smiling; "I will not discuss the question of origin. But I do know that this little head threatens to spoil the most lovely points of your daughter's character. She was obstinate, wilful and capricious; but since Jeanne Derville has been her friend, her impetuosity has been subdued, her passions calmed, as if by a miracle. She has worked much better; you must have noticed the improvement in her letters. She has become regular and submissive; she governs herself, in order to imitate her friend, and become more worthy of her. You see, madame, what Jeanne Derville has done. See, this is her influence over Victorine. You can now judge of her."

"I am truly enchanted with what you tell me, and I shall be delighted to know this wonder."

"Nothing is easier; but I forgot to tell you, all these beautiful qualities are tarnished by a very sad defect."

"What is it, then?"

"Unfortunately the one of all others that we are least disposed to pardon in a young girl."

"Indeed! And this is Victorine's friend? You frighten me."

"Oh, do not tremble! This defect is not contagious; and if, unhappily, your daughter's friend is not likely soon to free herself from it, still, be perfectly certain that Victorine will not catch it in her company."

"If you imagine you are becoming more explicit, I declare I give it up, without trying to guess."

"Well, then, know that Jeanne Der-

ville is one of those creatures who seem created to taste the joys of life. It is impossible to see her without also saying that she has been made for all elegant distinctions, and all the refinements of luxury, and yet, when she leaves here, she will not have perhaps a stone on which to lay her head. The day when she will quit us laden with prizes, covered with medals, furnished with all our diplomas, she will have for her whole fortune only the five hundred francs paid by the state, until their twenty-first year, to the daughters of the colonels raised at St. Denis. She is poor, poor, poor."

"It is an unhappy destiny," said the baroness, with emotion. "I do not know little Derville, and still her situation touches me. I have never seen her, and I feel as if I loved her already. I will wait on her. Truly am I gratified that my foolish little Victorine should have obtained such a friend. But will it not be possible to do something for so worthy and interesting an orphan?"

"Nothing, at present, I thank you for her; now all would be useless. You know well our scholars have here no real wants that are not satisfied. We treat all on the same footing, and with perfect equality; and with the best will in the world, we could not do more for the daughter of a king than we do for this poor, destitute one.

"She has, without paying, the best masters in the world. She learns all that a young girl ought to know, and at the same time, we give here a solid and practical education which will fit her, later, for all the exigencies of life. On leaving us, she will know how to keep house with economy if she is poor, with elegance if she is rich. In a word, we have here done for her all that the most affectionate and considerate father would wish us to do for his child. She, on her side, has profited wonderfully by all the instruction given to her. She came here knowing nothing; she knows now all a young girl of her age can know. If I desired any one to appreciate the house of St. Denis, and show the results that could there be obtained, I would say, see Jeanne Derville, and judge for yourself!"

"Ah! indeed, I ask only to see and judge myself. Can you not, next Thursday, send your phœnix to the parlor with Victorine?"

"Nothing easier; we will lend her to you for an hour."

The next Thursday, therefore, Mme. de Blanchelande, who had not told her daughter, in order to enjoy her surprise and happiness, asked for the friends at the same time.

To go to the parlor! It was for Jeanne a real event. Since her entrance into St. Denis she had been sent for only once.

"Me to the parlor? It is a mistake!" said she, to Mlle. de Blanchelande. "Who, now, thinks of asking for me? Besides, there is only one person who has the right, Mme. de Boutaric, whom I have so often told thee about; but she has other things to think of just now. She is making hay. I had a letter from Avranches, yesterday, which told me this important news."

"Come all the same, since they ask for you," replied Victorine; "if it is only to conduct me."

Arm-in-arm, the two inseparable ones went.

"Hold! there is mamma," said Victorine, pointing out to her friend a still young and elegantly dressed lady, whose only defect was in being rather too embonpoint.

There were in the parlor a dozen relatives, and not one of them was alone—each one had at her side the scholar she had asked for. One saw, here and there, little groups full of life; young girls and grandparents chattering for dear life. Jeanne, much moved, a little abashed, remained at the entrance of the vast saloon, looking and waiting.

"I must go," said she, sadly, preparing to retire; "they are mistaken. I thought so; who could dream of coming to see me, me? Good-bye, Victorine; do not stay too long, if you can help it."

In the meantime, Mme. Blanchelande stood at the corner of the mantel-piece, looking at Mlle. Derville with great attention.

"Pretty," said she to herself; "good figure, as well as we can judge under those wrappings; a frank, pleasing manner, with a touch of melancholy, which gives to her an attractive charm. Let it go on; I am very well pleased with my daughter's friend."

Victorine ran to her mother and held up her face to be kissed, but soon turned her head towards the door.

"Well," said the baroness, kissing her, "what art thou looking at?"

"Mamma, it is my little friend—it is Jeanne—Mlle. Derville—whom I spoke to you about last time. She was very happy, just now, poor little girl! She thought some one had come to see her, and you see that pleased her. Now she finds it was a mistake; and see, she is very sad."

"Well, my child, go for her; we will all three talk together."

"Oh! mamma, how good thou art to-day! Do you know nothing could give me more pleasure?" She ran to her friend.

"Come, my little Jeanne," said she, taking her hand, "since no one is here for thee, mamma wishes thee to stay with us all the time we are allowed in the parlor."

Jeanne went towards the baroness, a little agitated, and blushing with the embarrassment and awkwardness of a young girl of fifteen, who had lived far from the world. The affectionate and kind welcome of Mme. de Blanchelande put her at once at her ease.

"Mademoiselle," said she, "it is I who have sent for you. I know that you love well this bad little head, which gives me great pleasure, for they have told me that you are as good as you are wise. I have long wished to know and thank you."

"Oh! but it is kind in you, mamma, to have done that," cried Victorine. "It is more than a year since I have wished to ask you to send for Jeanne to talk with us; and then, you know, I didn't dare. She is however, pleasant to look at—my Jeanne—is she not, mamma?"

During this deluge of words, Jeanne did not find time to put in a word, but the moist look in her beautiful eyes, her sweet smile, and the visible beating of her heart, spoke for her, and thanked the baroness more eloquently than words could have done.

The impetuous Victorine held her mother and friend each by a hand. She led them both into a corner, and they were soon engaged in one of those conversations in which she gave all the news without much reluctance. Jeanne could hardly get a few words, from time to time, into the midst of this incessant gabble.

The baroness, who rather spoiled her daughter, allowed this flow of words to pass, and took advantage of Jeanne's attention to study her more at her ease. The physiognomy of Mlle. Derville was full of promise, and she at once saw the marks of intelligence and distinction that they had boasted of so much to her. She wished to see if the song resembled the feathers; and as soon as she thought her daughter had chattered on enough, she led the conversation herself, with that delicacy and tact that is given by the knowledge of the world and experience in life. She questioned her, without seeming to do so. She had the art of leading Jeanne to talk precisely of those things which would reveal her character and make known her soul. This hour of talk flew like a moment, and the baroness found herself as much pleased with what she heard, as with what she saw.

"Mademoiselle, we will meet again sometimes, I hope," said she, while kissing Jeanne, who arose to leave, a little before the time when they would be notified to retire. "I shall have great pleasure in asking for you each time. Victorine will love my visits much better if you share them with her; and I, in seeing you together, will imagine I have two daughters instead of one."

Jeanne thanked her as well as she could; that is to say, with an exquisite and perfectly natural grace, for her timidity had given way to a modest confidence which had enabled her to become herself again.

She had the good taste to go first, so as to leave Victorine alone with her mother for a few moments—a proof of delicacy and tact that did not escape the notice of the baroness.

"Well, mamma, how do you find her?" asked the spoiled child.

"Much better than thee," replied the baroness.

"Oh! say that again. That does not make me jealous. Go on!"

"Thou canst only improve with such a friend, and I advise thee to keep her a long time."

"Oh! all my life," said Victorine, with the enthusiastic ardor of a young

soul. "Thou dost not then know that Jeanne Derville is my 'adoration!'"

"Thy 'adoration!' The word is a little strong."

"Oh no, mamma; it is the one we use at Saint Denis. Our great friend, the one we love most, is called our 'adoration.' I confess, however, that the ladies do not like us to use this word; but that is nothing. I am also Jeanne's 'adoration,' as she is mine. Next Thursday, mamma, with Jeanne; is it not, mamma?"

"Yes, with Jeanne, with thy 'adoration,'" replied the baroness, kissing tenderly the blue eyes of her daughter.

The two friends were together a few moments before the end of the recess.

"Good news!" said Mlle. de Blanchelande to Mlle. Derville. "Thou hast made a conquest of my mother, as it seems, mademoiselle, you will of all the world."

"Hold thy tongue, little goose!" replied Jeanne, shrugging her shoulders. "I shall be too happy if I am not disagreeable to her."

"Behold an affectation of modesty which does not dupe me. Thou hast delighted, charmed, enchanted her. I know her well, and I am certain of what I say."

"So much the better; then this may be the means of allowing us to see more of each other later."

"A kiss for this good news."

As the period for the distribution of prizes drew near, Mlle. de Boutaric, who, for one reason and another, had always put off the journey she ought to make to Paris, promised, this time, to honor with her presence this solemnity, which holds such a great place in the lives of the young girls, and which the imperial institution of Saint Denis surrounds with all kinds of pomp and great preparation.

Jeanne thought on this occasion she ought to write to the marquise:

"*Madame and Dear Protectress:*—Fifteen days from to-day will be a great day for your little Jeanne. I have passed three months in the class with the white girdles, and they assure me that I shall receive many prizes. How happy I shall be, if they are given to me in your presence! It will seem as if you did not believe me unworthy of your goodness. Our mistresses, who are very indulgent, are kind enough to say that they are satisfied with me. I have already passed through nearly all the classes, although I am yet far enough from the one they call the 'Perfection Class,' where they wear a belt which unites the colors of all the other divisions. It appears that when one has worn this belt for a year, one can learn nothing more at the school. I must then decide on the course I will take. I must then try to profit by the education I have so freely received. These ladies wish me well; they will not abandon me. I am sure they will do all in their power to obtain me a situation which will guarantee my future. But I will not decide on anything, madame la marquise, before asking your advice, and with your consent. Madame la superintendante, who would be the best of women in my eyes if I had not the happiness of knowing you, thinks that it would be well for me to know what property belongs to me, if, indeed, I have any property—which I do not know. Do I possess anything? It is the first time I have allowed myself to ask you such a question, and I hope, madame, you will not think it impertinent, for they have desired me to do so. I can only expect one answer; and I do not deceive myself, that it will be soon necessary for me to work. But this necessity does not frighten me, and I am resigned beforehand to do all in my power, so as not to be dependent on any one. I do not know what is before me in life; but I feel that I will be strong to contend against everything, and to accomplish everything, while your affection remains with me. I hope I shall always be able to keep that, because I will try to be always worthy of it.

Your very humble servant,

JEANNE DERVILLE.

"P. S.—I have merited this year by my work and behavior, the right to plant a tree of recompense in the garden, which is a great distinction, I am told by the ladies and all the great people."

Madame de Boutaric was as punctual in her correspondence as she was in all things. In three days, neither more nor less, Jeanne always received her replies, treating methodically, one after the other,

all the subjects touched on by the young girl. The marquise, in her letters, did not make many professions of affection, and did not expend her ink in useless protestations. It was not her way. But in all she wrote to the daughter of the colonel, she showed a sincere and devoted interest, that would have been found always active in the trials of life.

As Jeanne became older, she had distinguished the different shades of her protectress's character; the brusque ways of the marquise did not hide her real goodness. She had, above all, done justice to her unfailing good sense, to her strict rectitude, to her reliable judgment, from which nothing could make her deviate.

The uneasiness of Mlle. Derville was, therefore, very great, when a week passed without hearing from Mme. de Boutaric.

"I do not understand this. I fear everything," said she to Mlle. de Blanchelande. "See, dear, it is the first time since I have been at St. Denis, that the marquise has left a letter of mine unanswered. Something serious has happened there—I have bad presentiments—I dread some evil."

"Why do you look thus on the dark side?" replied the careless Victorine. "A month ago thy marquise cut her hay, to-day she gathers her barley. Be quiet and fear nothing. I am certain she will surprise thee, on examination-day, in a robe with three flounces."

"God grant it! But I know her better than you do. Mme. de Boutaric is not a woman of flounces, nor of surprises; at least not of this kind. There is sorrow in the air for me."

Ten days passed without anything coming to ease Mlle. Derville's fears.

CHAPTER VIII.

ONE morning she was called into the study of the superintendent, who held in her fingers a letter, post-marked Avranches, and directed in an unknown hand. "My dear child," said the high dignitary, "God, who knows how great your strength is, has sent you a new trial; you have lost your protectress, your second mother. Mme. la Baronne de Boutaric is no more—I have just received the news of her death. This noble lady has been carried off in a few days. She has sunk under an acute disease, against which the doctors found they were unable to contend from the first."

Jeanne listened silently to these few words; the words of reply would not come. One might have thought she had not understood—this news, so entirely unexpected, had thrown her into a sort of stupor. The superintendent looked silently at her, and did not try to abate the violence of this her first sorrow.

In a few moments, the young girl, who had not opened her lips, dried, with the back of her hand, two big tears which ran down her cheeks. She then took the unsealed letter which the superintendent handed to her, and with slow and trembling fingers unfolded it.

This letter was from M. Gravis, the notary of the marquise, and formerly also of the colonel. M. Gravis enjoyed the entire confidence of the marquise, as he had done that of M. Derville. It was he who had been employed to extricate the affairs of her inheritance, unfortunately so much involved; and she remembered seeing him, more than once, at the Rosery, when she was a little girl. M. Gravis was economical of paper, which brought him nothing; he loved only to write on leaves stamped with the arms of France; no person knew better than himself, in each particular, how many lines to a page, and how many letters to a line, and what was the value due him for these law papers so carefully prepared by his clerks.

His epistle, therefore, on free paper, was short, and very slight of details. All the pith of the letter was contained in the postscript. Notaries do use, occasionally, this feminine artifice.

"Mme. la Marquise has been carried off so suddenly that she had not time to arrange her affairs. She had died leaving no will, although I have several times urged her to place her last wishes in writing, and offered her the aid of my experience. It costs so little to put things in order. It will not make one die, and if it should, one has at least the consolation of having done the best they could for those they love."

Jeanne read and returned the letter to the superintendent without speaking. Big tears, that she did not feel, ran

down her pale cheeks. The superintendent looked a long time at this young face, which emotion rendered still more full of interest and sensibility. Her looks filled her with almost maternal tenderness. Whilst Jeanne wept for her dead protectress and her lost friend, the superintendent, who knew better the necessities and requirements of life, thought also of the material consequences her death without a will (according to M. Gravis's letter) would have for the poor orphan, of whom the marquise was the sole dependence. The death of Mme. de Boutaric under such circumstances was absolute ruin for Jeanne.

The friend of the colonel was rich, and her relations were very distant, and had never expected her property.

On several occasions she had assured the notary that she would do something for "this little Derville," and Gravis did not doubt, that from his respectable client, "this something" meant a great deal. He had never, for his part, neglected to encourage her in so praiseworthy an intention. He had been the friend of the colonel, he had a constant and faithful remembrance of him, and he felt a sincere interest in his daughter, whose success he had heard of with true happiness. He was not less proud than the marquise when she showed him the reports that the institution sends out, each month, to the families of the pupils, as they do to the grand chancellor. Those of Jeanne were always so complimentary.

Mme. de Boutaric had never allowed the young girl to suspect her generous intentions, because she believed (as do some narrow-minded persons) that the threatening prospects of poverty would cause her to work harder.

Although truly religious, the marquise had an instinctive and deep repugnance to enter into any act which could recall death to her thoughts. The idea of a will, for example, was particularly antipathetic to her.

She said, as so many others have, "There is no haste about that."

Death hastened, however! He fell on the marquise as on his prey, and carried her off in three days. She took with her the last hope of Jeanne Derville's fortune. But Jeanne, although knowing her poverty, was not thinking of this question of money, which holds, alas! such a large place in the life of some women. She was not an avaricious soul; and in this ruin of her prospects she wept only for the wound of her heart.

"Behold me again an orphan!" murmured she, in a low tone, whilst her head rested sadly on her breast. "I had still one loved one in this world, and she has gone—now I have nothing!"

"You are mistaken, my child," said the superintendent, taking her hand. "God remains to you above, and below you have the sympathy of all who know, the affection of all who come near you. Your lot is still beautiful, and I know many women who would envy you."

"You are right, madame," said Jeanne, drying her large eyes. "I was ungrateful towards heaven and earth, towards God and towards you."

"Without counting this good Victorine de Blanchelande, who loves you like a sister!"

"Oh, that is true! and I love her also. But there are times when, overwhelmed by sorrow and trouble, one seems to forget all."

"I know that; but it is precisely at these times that we must display all our courage, and show that we are stronger than destiny. Remember of what blood you are born. You are the daughter of a brave soldier. Be brave as he! We are women; it is not on the battle-field and at given hour that we can show our valor. It is everywhere; it is every day, every hour, every minute. Our task is less famous than that of men; it is not less painful, nor less meritorious. Be assured of that, my child."

The superintendent knew Jeanne Derville well enough to be certain that it was not necessary to urge her. It was sufficient in this as in all else, to point out things to start the young girl on her course. She would know well how to run it herself to the very end.

An affectionate gesture dismissed the orphan.

"We must confess," thought the superintendent, as Jeanne left the study; "we must confess that, so far, fate has not spared the poor child. The blows follow each other as if to crush her. She is struck, wounded at the same time in

her interests and her affections. Not one trial has been spared her! But she is young, and life is long!"

CHAPTER IX.

VICTORINE, meanwhile, had been alone, worrying as an unmated bird. She was beginning to be uneasy at the long absence of her friend; she knew that Jeanne had been called to the study of the superintendent, who rarely, and only on great occasions, thus honored the pupils. She considered that those in authority should be reserved, and that by remaining generally hidden and invisible, she would best preserve her prestige. Let it be known that this honor was not much desired; for the communications which gave rise to the summons were usually unpleasant rather than agreeable. Jeanne's conduct was always so irreproachable in all respects that Victorine had no fear in seeing her go. But as the interview lasted much longer than usual, her little head set to work, and because she knew nothing, she became apprehensive of everything.

The recess ended before Jeanne's return.

Victorine's heart beat quickly when she saw her friend enter the schoolroom. By ill luck they were not placed near each other, and the incorruptible Jeanne always showed unvarying obedience to the rule of silence. She must still wait a long time for the explanation so earnestly desired. The eyes of the pretty inquisitive essayed several times to employ the intervention of the telegraph, not electric, but very convenient, which they use in the boarding-schools of young girls, as well as in the colleges of boys. But the wandering glance of the overseer, who suspected something going from one to the other, did not allow even of this kind of communication, unsatisfactory as it might be.

After school came the hours of confidences.

Jeanne related all. Victorine replied, in these charming words: "I almost rejoice at thy misfortunes; for I, alone, am left to love thee now! Fear nothing; I will love thee enough to make up for all those whom thou hast lost!"

"Oh! how good you are!"

"I do not know about that. I only know I love thee!"

The tribute of tears to the marquise being paid, Jeanne naturally commenced thinking of her future, darkened by sad forebodings. The lot of orphans is sad: deprived of their natural protectors; of their family, who ought to dream of their future and settle their fate. The thoughts, in such conditions, are naturally grave and serious. But in courageous natures, uneasiness does not produce discouragement. The understanding, clear and true, that she had of things roused Jeanne, as a new goad to give herself up, without truce or mercy, to the work which now alone could sustain her.

The day of the distribution of prizes, to which a few days before she had so joyously invited Madame de Boutaric, surprised her in the midst of her sorrow. It is useless to add, that she no longer enjoyed the success that she obtained. Her thoughts were elsewhere; and her remembrances had gone, unhappily, to those who were no more.

Victorine, who returned home to her family for the holidays, was obliged to leave her, unwillingly, for two long months. New subject of sadness!

Mme. de Blanchelande saw this, and in a burst of goodness and sensibility, for which she must have all the credit (for her daughter never so much as dared to ask it), she solicited as a favor permission to take Mlle. Derville to the country with her friend.

They replied that this was absolutely impossible, for Jeanne's father, in dying, had expressed the wish that his daughter should be reared in strict seclusion; and that she could not leave the institution until her education was entirely finished.

Only one person had had the right, formerly, to order or permit it. This was the marquise, guardian of Jeanne; but this lady dying, the superintendent was obliged henceforth to conform to the wishes of the father.

All this was so just, that no objection or reply could be made. The baroness understood it; and the two young friends felt it, also, as well as herself. Jeanne resigned herself to pass again these long and cruel weeks, which took from her all she loved. August and September weighed heavily on her

One cannot sufficiently understand how sad the holidays are for the poor scholars obliged to remain at school. With what swelling hearts, and eyes full of tears, do they see on distribution day, depart, one after another, their companions, their friends, and (to use Victorine's expression) even their adorations abandon them.

And the next day, how deserted the great house seems! What loneliness in the class-rooms, what silence in the courts, only yesterday so noisy! How *small* one seems in the refectory where there is no one else! You work a little to pass the unoccupied hours; but you work slowly and without zeal. The mistresses who take care of you, pity you, and, in a low tone, pity each other. Every one feels that such things ought not to be.

For the others, it is the time for going about on long visits to friends, for joys and comforts in the bosom of the family; and one unhappy child is left there, all alone, without friends, without relations. Ah! surely we cannot blame her for being sad.

Jeanne, naturally, as all prisoners of time, had made a little calendar, on which was inscribed all the days which must pass before she could see Victorine. Each evening she scratched one out. The last was effaced in its turn, and the next day Mlle. de Blanchelande would return to her.

What happiness, after such long absence, to see again the one she loves! Jeanne now found all easy and simple. The future smiled on her under the eyes of Victorine.

On commencing her studies again, she entered into the class called "Perfection," where they reviewed all that had been the subjects of the preceding courses, and where the professors and mistresses gave to their master-pieces of scholars the last touches and highest polish.

Jeanne this year made heroic efforts, and surprised even those who had for so long followed and admired the development of all the resources of this her rich and beautiful nature.

It was, truly, for Mlle. Derville a perfection. The word was, indeed, applicable to her. The flower of her soul opened in all its splendor. Alive to all that was beautiful and good; earnestly applying, and industrious, as the noble woman always is, who desires to win by her own efforts, Jeanne had been imbued with science, as the soft white fleece becomes imbued with the tint that is given to it. She shone in all her brightness during the examinations. When great persons came to visit St. Denis, she was the one always examined before them. More than one august look had rested on this interesting young girl with visible pleasure. More than one solicitude, as high as benevolent, was informed of the future destined for this exquisite intelligence, this thrilling beauty. Unhappily, nothing seems more difficult in France than to arrange the lot of a young girl, because it is only completed with the concurrence of a good husband, which is a rare bird not unnestled every day. Jeanne understood, guessed, or foresaw all that; but her pride forbade the thought from being read even by her best friend. She remained silently waiting.

CHAPTER X.

IN the meantime, the superintendent, who had such great esteem and true affection for Jeanne, interested herself in the future of her beautiful favorite. She felt as much fear as sorrow in launching into this vast world, alone, exposed to all its temptations and hazards, a young girl ignorant of everything not learnt in books; one whose attractions, even, became for her so many snares. A wise woman, she desired before acting to know the exact state of her heroine's finances. So she wrote to the notary of Avranches a letter of inquiry, to which her name and official title gave such authority that she must receive a serious reply. The notary answered immediately in his most beautiful style and handwriting—the hand and style of a notary. He informed Mme. la superintendante that the settling of M. Derville's affairs was unfortunate. He had done all in his power to take up all his notes without making great sacrifices; but the court had, nevertheless, directed the sale of all that remained of the colonel's property. He felt happy, however, in having saved

from the ruin the house and garden, with a few acres in the enclosure behind. "I could not do better; others might have done worse. The pretty situation and whole appearance of the house; the satisfactory arrangements of the details; the perfect order of the place, and, permit me to add, my personal knowledge of what is best in its surroundings, have enabled me to rent the whole place and furniture for the sum of 465 francs a year, charging to the lessee the land and personal property tax, the levy on doors and windows, and the fire insurance premium. You see, madame, I have forgotten nothing.

"Col. Derville's chief creditor has been very accommodating, for if he had been evilly disposed he could have compelled the sale of the house. He has not only not done that, but, on the contrary, has been contented with an assignment of rents arranged by myself. In three years the last debt will be paid, and the daughter of our dear colonel can take possession of her estate. I have secured, also, a saving from her mother's dower, amounting to the sum of 3,500 francs, invested by me, and now bearing interest, for which I declare myself, by this letter, a debtor to the heiress, and which may serve for her first necessaries on leaving Saint Denis. If Mlle. Derville ever needs the advice of a business man, she can address, with all confidence, the one who has the honor to be," &c.

Without pausing very long on the forms of M. Gravis's politeness, the superintendent calculated mentally, but with an accuracy that experience in business matters gives to all the world, even to women, the amount of Jeanne's resources.

"Very little," thought she, "as this good man says. We cannot expect such a young girl to enter the world dressed as she is here. Her outfit will soon swallow up a good part of the notary's savings. Only her little house will be left—a souvenir of her family—a ground of sentiment, but not of support. Our pension of five hundred francs a year does not last long. In three years she will no longer receive it. She must gain her bread. Well, she will gain it. Our society, even if as badly regulated as I am told, cannot be so lost, but that a young, honest, talented girl, full of energy and resolution, can gain in it an honest livelihood."

The feelings of the superintendent, so favorable to Jeanne, were entered into by all the ladies of Saint Denis. But these good ladies had more will than power, and would have been much embarrassed if forced to carry out all their good intentions.

The superintendent sent for Jeanne to come again to her study, a few days before the time of her final departure.

"My dear child," said she, "your education is finished, and soon you will be free. But your position is singular, and requires very serious attention. Thanks be to God, your reason is in advance of your age. Several who have showed in this House talent and energy, have afterwards wounded our affection, and sullied this beautiful title of 'Pupil of Saint Denis,' which they dishonor by bearing. I am convinced we have nothing of that kind to fear from you. Indeed, it is not for ourselves, but for you, I speak thus. Have you ever thought of your future, my child?"

"Often, madame."

"Indeed! Tell me how it seems to you."

"As something unknown, terrible; as an enemy against whom I must contend. But I accept the contest."

"I am glad to see you in such a frame of mind. I have known for a long time that you were brave. But have you decided on any scheme?"

"How can I, when, as yet, I am ignorant of the world or life—when the walls of our House have bounded my views for so long a time—when the enclosure of this park is the extent of my horizon? I wait!"

"Jeanne," replied the directress of Saint Denis, with great sweetness, "if we had not thought of the difficulties of the position in which, unfortunately, young girls such as you are placed, having neither family nor fortune, we would be very culpable, or, at least, imprudent. But this is not so. We have in our hands a last resource, which we use only in favor of those who have deserved it by their irreproachable conduct.

"You can now return to others that which you have received from us. After having been a scholar, you can become a teacher. You need never leave us.

This House can be always yours, and as it has served as an asylum to your childhood and youth, it can also be a refuge for your whole life. Your beginning will be humble, and probably rather hard; but I know that here you need fear nothing. You do not dread trouble, and when one has your ability, progress is certain, advancement rapid. You will soon reach an honorable, independent position, assured for life."

Jeanne listened with the most respectful attention to the superintendent, who could but admire the attitude of the young girl, full of dignity and grace. Mlle. Derville was standing before her —her beautiful eyes lowered, her two hands leaning on the back of an armchair, while from time to time a color stole over her cheeks, and a visible emotion swelled her breast.

To stay at Saint Denis all her life! The prospect was not attractive—and we can affirm that it was not the destiny she had foreseen in her girlish dreams. Yes, truly, she was full of gratitude to the House, where she had found so hospitable a welcome, such devoted care, such a complete education. But Saint Denis, if good for a time, for one's whole life became very bad.

Jeanne knew nothing of the world, and this she frankly acknowledged. Yet even her ignorance was full of vague hopes and unavowed desires. She did not feel courageous enough to drive them back into her heart; she had not yet lived as she desired to live. Her heart was filled with unknown trouble, and with an agitation that was not without charm or sorrow, she shuddered at the thought of engulfing her ardent youth, (eager for all the joys of which God implants the need and gives the hope to his creatures,) in the cold austerity of an almost monastic asylum. Could one require such a sacrifice from a young girl whose whole life had been, until now, shut up in the straight surroundings of a boarding school, but who carried within herself a soul all ready to unfold? Was Mlle. Derville then necessarily what is called a romantic person? Some might say no! But she contained in herself a thousand germs which would, in time, develop. She did not know the use she would make of her liberty; but she did not wish to give it away before tasting it. She was so undecided that she could not reply to the questions so clear and distinct of the superintendent. That high dignitary understood this uncertainty and this emotion, she therefore paused some minutes to allow Jeanne time for reflection. "Well!" said she at last. "What course will you take? What do you decide? I await your reply."

Jeanne started as if awakened by a shock; she trembled, and a nervous paleness spread over her face. The word she was going to speak, was it not the word of her destiny? The look she now raised had no more the timidity of a young scholar before her dreaded mistress. This look, though full of deference, was stamped with cold firmness and calm resolution.

"Madame la Superintendent," said she, "I do not think it necessary to speak here of my gratitude; I am penetrated with your goodness to me; and it would be the greatest happiness that could happen to my life to pass it near you."

After this ingenious sentence, which her mistress of rhetoric (now-a-days these young ladies study rhetoric as well as ourselves,) had doubtlessly called an "An exordium by insinuation," there was an imperceptible stop.

"Then you accept?" said the superintendent, auguring other than she need have done from the first part of this reply.

"Not at present," replied Jeanne, with great quickness.

"Why? When then, my child?"

"I do not exactly know when, madame; undoubtedly little later than now."

"Later! Later! You surely know that when one leaves the institution they cannot return?"

Jeanne knew this, and did not reply directly to the observation. "The fitness for this life, though it is rather severe, is not given to all," replied she; "and I am forced to acknowledge that as yet I have it not; but I will use my greatest effort to gain it, and if I have the happiness to feel it within me I will come throw myself at your feet, and implore you to pardon my hesitation of to-day. This pardon I feel you will grant me, because you are just and good,

and will see in my refusal only the proof of my sincere, earnest desire to fulfil worthily all my obligations, should I once assume them."

"You do not wish to accept at present?"

"I wish it—I cannot do so."

"Reflect, my child! it is your concern—the calling to be a professor, severe as you have just termed it, ought to be given to us, and no person can force it on another without the heaviest responsibilities. But tell me, however, what you think of doing when you leave here? If you cannot remain with us, you cannot hinder us from following you everywhere in thought, with a serious and deep interest."

"A visit to a friend during the vacation, cannot, I suppose, be considered as leaving the house, in the sense the rules provide against, and forbid to those who wish to pass from scholars to mistresses, and then live for ever at Saint Denis. It is simply a little journey for health. After ten years passed between four walls, one needs a little fresh air. I intend to accept the invitation made so long ago by Mme. La Baronne de Blanchelande, and go home with my dear Victorine. During one or two months I will reflect and examine myself, and on my return, you will read my soul. You will tell me what I ought to do, and I will do what you say."

"Go! I see you are lost to us, my beautiful obstinate one. Set out! may God bless you, and life be merciful to you. You have been at Saint Denis long enough to desire to quit it. I have not always been sixty, and I can easily put myself in your place. Go, then, wherever the unknown destiny calls you. Our good wishes will follow you. I desire only one thing for you. May you be as happy as you deserve to be. Your education is finished. You rank among the best of all our scholars. It is right you should carry from here the proof of our satisfaction. Your diplomas are ready, your high marks, the results of your examinations and your competitions, are faithfully recorded. All these are to be sent, to-day, to the Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honor, with the formal demand, that I make in your behalf to his excellency, for the title of scholar of Saint Denis. You know this is a real title, much envied, of which, as we are very sparing, it becomes more and more difficult to gain. It is obtained only by the choicest of our scholars. You shall have it. I know that too often some wicked persons, who abuse everything, do not fear falsely to claim titles which do not belong to them. We are taking means to punish these forgers, and our diplomas will still keep all their prestige." After speaking thus, in her grand manner, the superintendent dismissed the young girl.

When Jeanne left the study, she felt as if a weight of lead was raised from her breast—she breathed more freely. It seemed as if the walls had burst to let her pass, and that she entered, at last, free of foot, into the world, into life. But her joy was mixed, nevertheless, with secret apprehensions. She had shown to the superintendent a decision which she did not feel. When she opened her mouth to say *no*, she did not know but she ought to say *yes*. But at the decisive moment, she seemed to hear the voice of nature, which no longer permitted hesitation, and carried her by its loyal frankness. With such a personage as the superintendent, to hesitate in accepting was to refuse. Her lot was cast.

Jeanne had herself pronounced the word of her destiny, and there was no reversing her decision; that she knew well; yet she experienced a relief. There are some souls, for whom uncertainty is the most cruel thing in the world.

Only from the brightness in her large eyes, and her carriage, her head high, Victorine, who was familiar with the slightest expression of the young girl, and who guessed even the thoughts of her friend, from the compressed lips, trembling motion, and puckering brows, saw, at once, something serious had occurred.

"What is it?" said she, gazing in her face.

"I belong to thee," replied Jeanne, "never to leave thee. I have sacrificed what they call my whole future. Take me then—lead me away—between us now, all is for life and death!"

"The world is ours!" cried Victorine, with holy confidence, a noble exaltation which youth alone knows.

CHAPTER XI.

A FEW days afterwards, the two friends took part in the last distribution of prizes they would ever see at the Imperial Institution. As usual, Jeanne's beautiful brow bent under the weight of crowns, and the daughter of the colonel was applauded by her young companions, with a warmth and enthusiasm, which showed to all that her heart was as good as her head, and that she knew how to make herself as much loved as admired. The Diploma of Honor was publicly decreed to her, with the ceremonies used on this solemn occasion.

She left the same evening, for ever, the house where she had passed her youth. The Baroness de Blanchelande took her away with her daughter.

Jeanne, in passing the threshold of the door which she had not crossed for ten years, felt a deep undefinable emotion. Great as was her joy at being released, she still felt heavy-hearted. She only remembered, that behind these dark walls, she had left the greater part of her life; that she had there tasted the pure joys of friendship; that there she had been taught the stern charms of labor. Work and friendship, these two great things! After all, she had passed many happy hours in this life; and even if she should never regret leaving there, she would always recollect it with grateful pleasure.

Let us say, nevertheless, this ray of feeling will last, only as lasts the lightning. Other impressions will soon replace this flying impression, as other ideas will soon fill her young soul. Jeanne Derville, was she not at the happy age where woman looks always to the future and never to the past.

The carriage of Mme. de Blanchelande was one of those wonderful affairs, with eight soft springs, whose oval body resembles the sea-shell in which the painters place their mermaids floating on the blue waves. It rocked gently the three ladies. Jeanne could not have been more delighted, if she had mounted into the carriage of a king at a time when such a jaunt was equal to receiving the title of nobility.

The baroness drove two half-blooded trotters, whose rapid steps were admired by everybody at the Bois. It is charming to go fast; especially in youth, when one is always in a hurry! They passed through the popular quarters that the young girl did not know. What could she know out of St. Denis? Her friend named everything as they passed, and enjoyed her ingenuous astonishment. Soon they came to the Boulevards in the midst of the brilliant splendors of Paris. It was late—nearly night, but the Parisian nights, have they not the brightness of day? The gas shining everywhere, the dazzling shop-windows, the fronts of the restaurants, resplendent with light, a busy, cheerful, joyous crowd, going and coming along the walks; on either side, those high houses, whilst the too numerous equipages disputed the too narrow street.

"Is not all this beautiful?" murmured Victorine in Jeanne's ear.

"Oh! truly beautiful," replied Jeanne, whose eyes were wild with this novel spectacle. They soon reached the Boulevard Italien, that brilliant focus of feverish activity and ardent pleasures, where the great capital displays itself in its whole strength. The carriage took a road to the left, lessened its speed, and soon the coachman cried, with a solemn, resounding voice, "Open the gate! if you please."

The gate instantly opened, and the keeper, covered with lace on all his coat-seams, rang the bell of the apartments, when a grand lackey, powdered like hoar-frost, lowered the carriage-steps.

The three ladies ascended a large white marble staircase, covered in the centre with a thick, red carpet. The apartment was on the first floor. Victorine, who mounted four steps at a time, entered first, ran quickly through the ante-room, opened the door of a little parlor, and threw her arms around the neck of a gentleman who was standing before her. "Good day, father! Here we are!"

The one Victorine saluted with this honored name, was a gentleman still young, elegant in his appearance, and well dressed. His blonde hair, like his daughter's, was lighted at his temples by some threads of silver, which were not unbecoming to him. After embracing Victorine, he held out his hand to the baroness, and bowed to Mlle. Derville with a courteous grace, of which

the dancing-master at St. Denis could not have had the least conception.

"Papa, this is Jeanne! my friend!" said Victorine, by way of an introduction.

"We have known you for a long time, mademoiselle," replied M. de Blanchelande; "my daughter has often spoken of you. We have long known that you have been good enough to love, a little, this mischievous little head; who, for her part, adores you. We will all do as she has done," added he, in such a way that there was not too much meaning to his words.

Jeanne, rather embarrassed, did not know how to reply.

Mme. de Blanchelande, worn out by the fatigues of a long day's trip, had gone to her room. She did not, therefore, hear the baron's compliment, of which Victorine took no notice.

"Papa, I am hungry," said she, in the tone of an only daughter; and her tone showed, decidedly, she was used to being obeyed.

"Oh! you are always hungry! You did not dine at Saint Denis? then why did you come home so late?"

"Well! what if we did eat a little bite, as we were leaving, in a great hurry, and so bad, as it always is—as you well know—at school?"

"What a tone you use, my contemptuous beauty!'

"We have no desire to return there soon! neither my little Jeanne nor I! We have put our four pieces of linen into five bundles; *that* has taken us some time! Think, then, of the packing and moving of the things of two great characters, who have been there for ten years! Then, there was no end to the farewells! They would willingly have kept us; all wished to embrace us, and Jeanne especially! If we had allowed these ladies to have their way, I believe we would be there still; but all that has hollowed my stomach—if I have any left!"

"Goodness! don't cry; search, perhaps you can find a little bread in the house. With such teeth, and your appetite of eighteen years, you ought not to be hard to suit."

"Of course," replied Victorine, pouting, "we have learnt how to fast elsewhere, and we do know how to be contented with a little; but a kind little papa, who wished to do the polite, would invite us to sup at a restaurant!"

"Oh! that is it? You want to go to a public-house? Indeed! miss; you who were this morning at a convent!"

"Well! what is the harm?"

"You, who still wear that stuff garment which makes you look like a little nun? No! truly, Victorine, you cannot mean that!"

"On the contrary, that is just what I do mean; it is the only means you have to *un-nun* us a little. I can put on one of my last year's dresses in a minute."

"And mademoiselle? what will she do?" said M. de Blanchelande, looking at Jeanne, who was discreetly employed in contemplating two enormous engravings, one representing the Epsom Races, and the other the Chantilly Hippodrome, on the day they contest the French Derby.

"True," replied Victorine, with charming vivacity, "I forgot Jeane has nothing to wear but this hideous uniform. Very well! I will not wear a dress when she has none; I do not wish to be prettier than she is."

"But"—

"There are no *buts;* take us both as we are, father!"

"You ought to be a John Bull," said the baron, touching his daughter on the forehead; "you are so obstinate. We always have to end by giving up."

"Indeed, father, I think you had better commence by doing so; it would be an economy of time."

The baron shrugged his shoulders—it was his only reply.

"Where do you think we are going?" said he to Mme. de Blanchelande, who at this moment returned to the parlor. "Your daughter will absolutely go sup at a restaurant! Will it really do for me to take them?"

"For once. I do not think it will be out of the way."

"Will you go with us?"

"No, indeed! my day's journey is complete without that. Take the girls, and do not stay too late!"

They all three went; the baron as joyous and gay as the young girls. He had the air of a schoolboy at home for the holidays. In five minutes they reached the door of the restaurant,

where the baron was known. He ascended the staircase and installed the two girls in an entresol cabinet, decorated with vulgar brilliancy, which, nevertheless, seemed to the little boarding-school girl to merit the title of magnificent, in its highest sense. She was especially dazzled by a certain paper, honeycombed and gilt, which seemed to her of an incomparable richness.

The baron selected his bill of fare as carefully as if he was giving supper to two ambassadresses; he did not forget certain Moselle wines, which, he said, had the gift of tongues, and on which he relied to make his two comrades chat.

"I am certain," said Victorine, "that Jeanne has never before supped at a restaurant?"

"No, indeed! never!"

"Then," said the baron, "we will set our best things before you—you need not refer to the bill of fare."

Monsieur de Blanchelande, like all good livers, was charmingly entertaining at table. He possessed, in the greatest degree, those open-hearted manners which set all at their ease.

The young girls picked some shellfish with their fingers; and already Jeanne unconsciously talked with the father as freely as with the daughter. Her light prattle charmed the baron, who delighted to see her spirit, sparkling as the white froth of the good wine that crowned her glass.

Mlle. Derville had no apprehensions. What could she fear in such company? Mlle. Derville filled her glass—she drank. As a provocative agent, she only was familiar with the weak wine and water of the boarding-school. She yielded to the perfidious and dangerous sweetness of the light wine of "Ai," without taking sufficient food. Soon she felt an unknown warmth penetrate her, which was pleasant and joyous at first, and whose dangers she did not perceive until later. Her eyes shone with a new light that Victorine had never seen. Bright piquant words rose unsought to her lips. She was astonished at her own witticisms. One would think another woman had taken her place; as the butterfly takes that of the chrysalis, astonishing the beholders by her brilliant metamorphosis.

Victorine naively asked if they had not substituted some one else for her friend during the journey. The Jeanne she had known, was a thoughtful, melancholy individual, sweet, sad, rather timid. The one now before her was as mischievous as an imp, as light as a page, as gay as a bird.

There however, came a moment, when Jeanne, after being giddy with her words, and mystified in her spirits, felt by degrees her heavy head roll on her shoulders, a torpor weighed down all her members, her eyelids became so heavy, it was impossible to raise them without a violent effort. Her lips, that had just uttered such brilliant sallies, now moved but silently. Her tongue, lately so quick at repartee, muttered unintelligible words. "I am sleepy," said she, in a low tone, turning from her friend her beautiful, but useless, eyes; and leaning against the side of a mirror, her pretty little head, pale and fatigued.

"You shall go to bed, my child," said M. de Blanchelande, who could not help smiling as he looked at her. He rang the bell, paid his bill, and put on their hats. Jeanne remained immovable leaning against the door.

"What is the matter?" asked Victorine.

"I feel as if my limbs were gone."

"Try and recover them, unhappy one. Let us see then, what is the matter with her, papa? Oh, you look so wickedly!"

The gas had heated the room till it was nearly suffocating.

M. de Blanchelande opened the window; a breath of fresh air on Jeanne's face, revived her a little. Victorine placed on her shoulders a cape like her dress, which she wore this evening for the last time, and which had, most certainly, not expected to end its virtuous career in such a compromising adventure.

The baron passed out first; the two young girls followed. Jeanne, on leaving the saloon, found herself facing a steep enough staircase; she was seized with a sudden faintness, which she conquered by her resolute will. Holding by the bannisters, she commenced her descent; once on the threshold, she was safe. M. de Blanchelande took her hand and drew it in his arm, which support she needed at this moment most amazingly.

Victorine walked on the other side of her father.

"I think, papa, you have made my little friend tipsy," said she, shaking her finger.

"Oh, no! it is nothing, she is only overcome by the heat."

"Yes, the heat or the wine; I will ask mamma."

"It is not worth while for you to do that. Your mother will be in bed—you must not wake her—to-morrow this little surprise will be forgotten. Take Mlle. Derville at once to her room. I will send Pauline to help you put her to bed.

"Let us get on, mademoiselle—a little more courage. How are these little feet—better?"

"Much better—very well. Are we far from home?"

"No! close by. Here we are! Do you not know the door?"

Jeanne knew nothing—but she let them lead her.

All passed off as M. de Blanchelande predicted.

They undressed the young girl in a moment, put her to bed, and she soon slept the deep sleep only known to youth.

CHAPTER XII.

THE next morning, Jeanne awoke at the hour the bell usually rang at Saint Denis. She had not been able to examine her room the night before, and was astonished at its magnificence, at the exquisite taste and comfort shown in every minute detail. Compared with the cold dormitory of the convent this room was worthy of a princess.

The young girl examined the thousand knick knacks arranged with such taste on the table, mantelpiece, etagère, of which she did not even know the use. She said to herself, "What a good thing it is to be rich!" She would soon awake to real life, as at this moment she awoke to the light of day. She remembered nothing of the events of last evening—to confess the truth she had never been conscious of them; she only knew she had taken supper at a restaurant with Victorine and her father—a very agreeable baron; she remembered, also, but vaguely, that she had had a very bad headache, but nothing more.

Victorine, not having yet forgotten her early rising, came in with her hair dishevelled and in her dressing-gown, with the proud indifference of youth, feeling it is beautiful, and sat down on the foot of the bed. She then commenced one of those unceasing chats which young girls alone indulge in—for they alone never exhaust the chapter of confidences, and always living together they had a great deal to talk about.

"You are coming on fast," said Victorine to Jeanne. "You take the prize for *wisdom* in the morning at Saint Denis, and you become *tipsy* the same evening at the English Coffee House. A fine debut, Jeanne darling. This is promising!"

"Upon my word I don't understand you. I *tipsy!* Me! What is it you do say?"

"How! Do you remember nothing?"

"No, indeed, nothing! Only that we supped together in a little saloon on the Boulevard, that we came home, and—oh, yes! I do *not* know how I got to bed!"

"I should think not; they put you to bed, my beauty. You could not tell your right hand from your left, and your little feet drew some patterns on the floor."

"Mon Dieu!" said Jeanne, overwhelmed with shame, hiding her face in her hands. "Is this really so?"

"Oh, I never fabricate!"

"Does your father know it?"

"He has laughed enough about it!"

"Then all I can do is to say good-bye to thee, and go away; for I can never dare look your father in the face again."

"Oh, you little wretch! I believe on the whole you can *dare* anything with him; he is very good, and very forgiving. I'll wager that before long you will be his chief favorite! You will outstrip me. Besides, he is not an ogre."

Victorine was still talking when they were interrupted by two slight knocks at the door.

"Who can it be?" asked Jeanne, sliding into bed with the supple gliding movement of a frightened snake hastening to regain its shelter.

Victorine opened the door. It was Pauline, the waiting maid, who came to know at what hour it would suit the young ladies to receive the dressmaker.

"At twelve," replied Victorine, who

being at home was naturally the spokeswoman.

"Is not that rather late?" asked Jeanne. "What can we do till then?"

"True, my dainty lady! I forgot that you have nothing to wear. You cannot go out with this rag," touching slightly and disdainfully, with the tip of her finger, the stiff dress worn out by too long use, and honorably whitened at the seams in more than one place. "Very well, let her come at ten."

At ten precisely, Mlle. Hortense entered the hotel, followed by two boys carrying a mass of textures, which might serve to beguile all the daughters of Eve from fifteen to fifty.

The ward of Mme. de Boutaric had never been exposed to such temptations. She was so confused at first that not being able to take all she dare not choose any.

"What do you wish?".

"Goodness! What am I to do with all that?"

"You cannot *take* all, mademoiselle," said the mantua-maker, with an insinuating manner; "but you must see all before deciding."

They opened the boxes, untied the bundles, and displayed the goods. There was everything—worsted and silks, stiff fabrics, and light tissues, all the fashions of the season; things which shine forth in one day and disappear the next.

"Are you in a hurry to take them away?" said Jeanne, in a tone which said, "They are so pretty; let me look at them at my ease."

Mlle. Hortense was not deceived; and, dissimulating on her side, replied in an indifferent way, "Look as long as you please, mademoiselle; that engages nothing."

Victorine, for her part, played, unconsciously perhaps, the pretty little role of the tempter.

"It is very important that you dress well," said she to her friend; "so that you may not be conspicuous. We intend to introduce you into a world which may be able to repair to you all the wrongs that fate has done. You must adopt the ways, customs, and dress of the world."

"Yes, I ought to; but I cannot," replied the orphan.

Mlle. Hortense, though listening intently, could not catch this sentence. Yet was she interested in watching the play of feeling in others, because she lived by those feeling, taking advantage of them if possible. She understood the *meaning* of the whispered sentence.

From these indications, seized and applied with wonderful sagacity, she very nearly guessed the true situation of Jeanne, and said to herself that Jeanne's beauty and youth deserved an unlimited credit; and that whatever trust they should give her would never be misplaced. So she pictured before Jeanne the deceitful bait of credit, and placed all her goods at her disposal with a grace that was most truly taking.

But the secret and correct instinct which distinguished Jeanne, made her see that this expedient, though it was so tempting, was very dangerous for her.

"I thank you, Mlle. Hortense, but on principle I only buy what I can pay for." And Jeanne, while speaking, looked into the pocket-book which enclosed all M. Gravis had saved for her.

"Mademoiselle will think of it," replied the persevering dressmaker. "What I have said is true; I will always be most happy to fulfil mademoiselle's orders."

The baroness entered to know their decision, and see if they needed advice.

"Mademoiselle wishes nothing!" said Mlle. Hortense, addressing the baroness.

"I did not say that," replied Jeanne, laughing; "only I cannot accept *all* you offer me."

"There is a middle course," said Mme. de Blanchelande. "Permit me to settle your little business. Let me commence with my daughter, and arrange for her. You will make four dresses for her. She has grown a great deal since last year, and wears her things out terribly. Her last year's dresses are only fit for her doll. Put on one side, for her, this—and that—also this tissue, and that one."

"It is done, madame."

"Very well. As for you, my fair little one," said Mme. de Blanchelande, turning to Jeanne, "you have no outfit. We must commence at the very beginning. It is indispensable for you to have a thorough toilet. You absolutely require it."

"True; mother is right," said Jeanne, in a low tone, to her friend. "I need everything to start with, and the funds also, as M. Glavis would say."

"Let us choose carefully," continued the baroness. "A black dress—you must have one always. A gray dress—it is always genteel. Two white, low-necked dresses, in case we should have a dinner-party and a ball the same day. They are fresh, charming, without pretension—so suitable for a young girl! Let us add two colored walking-dresses, two morning-dresses, and a wrapper. You cannot do with less."

"This is exactly what I told mademoiselle," said Hortense, triumphantly.

"It must be so," added Victorine, aiming to hurry up everything.

Of course Jeanne could not resist all these authorities, so she acquiesced.

The baroness chose the materials and fixed the prices. The dressmaker took her measure, and though she had too much tact to praise one woman before another, she still found means, by little admiring sentences, discreetly murmured to Jeanne's ear, to let her see that she found her beautiful, and predicted for her all the successes and triumphs of beauty.

Jeanne, still modest, wished not to hear—yet listened.

After the dressmaker, then came the milliner; then the shoemaker; then the linen draper.

How can I tell? Jeanne had nothing. She needed *all*. But all costs dearly! Every moment she saw increase, with inconceivable rapidity, the sum total of her expenses. Sometimes she felt a certain fear; then again she was reassured, and dreamed only of the happy chances of the future. Then, as do all elegant natures, perfectly genteel and entirely feminine, she rejoiced in this studied elegance, this refinement of luxury, from which, until this moment, she had been completely debarred.

The baroness hurried the trades-people, who redoubled their zeal.

Mlle. Derville's toilet improvised itself as if by enchantment. She had a dress made for dinner the same day.

It is only in Paris that we can accomplish miracles. The hair-dresser came in the afternoon. Her rich hair, for so long a time compressed by the miserable hat, till it was like a cap, resumed, under these skilful hands, its naturally waving, luxuriant movement of glowing brightness. It was too long to be left in free curls, but was arranged in thick bands, waving naturally on the forehead, whilst the twists descended by their own weight below the neck. "False chignons" were unknown, unneeded, and would have been disdained by Jeanne for their bold deceitfulness.

When Mlle. Derville went down to dinner, all declared the transformation complete. Her state now and in the morning, resembled a polished and unpolished diamond, when the fires sleep still in its veins, and when a skilled engraver has caused it to sparkle by all the angles of his thousand facets.

Neither the superintendent, nor the high dignitaries, nor the ladies of the two classes, nor the overseers, with their piercing eyes, could have recognised their timid and rather austere scholar, in this superb young creature, animated with the glowing breath of life, beaming with youth, and seeming made only to please, to dazzle, and to charm.

Mlle. de Blanchelande, frank and young, incapable of any sinister expression, ignorant of the name of jealousy, felt a joy, unmixed with envy, at the charms of her friend, and rejoiced over the successes Jeanne could not fail to obtain, as if they were her own.

"She is more beautiful than Victorine," thought the baroness; and a secret uneasiness struck her heart, in the most vulnerable place, where God has placed maternal love. As for the baron, he paid Mlle. Derville a polite compliment, (but in such an indifferent manner that it meant very little), on the good taste of her toilette, which he said neither astonished nor surprised him, as Mme. de Blanchelande had been kind enough to superintend it. These words gave satisfaction to all, and did not arouse distrust in any.

The first few days passed without incident. The baron spent most of his time at his club, as men of his age and position are too apt to do; dined rarely at home, and left the three women nearly always alone.

Once or twice, however, he placed himself, in the most gallant manner, at the commands of those he laughingly

called his two daughters. He took them to the Bois, now deserted by all the world; but Jeanne—still a little savage—found it none the less beautiful on that account. He then showed them, what the strangers' guide complaisantly calls, "the wonders of the Capital."

On all occasions, he shared his attentions equally between the two girls, paying no more to one than to the other; charming his daughter, who loved him devotedly, and gaining, gradually, the confidence of this timid beauty, Jeanne.

The orphan found all this a charming, agreeable, and harmonious life. She felt at her ease in this friendly, benevolent atmosphere, and thanked Providence for this resting-place, between the trials of Saint Denis, and the other severe trials of life, from which her thoughts were seldom entirely turned. She felt it was not yet time to decide on her future, and she considered it a mark of respect to her hosts to keep silent on the subject. But this did not prevent her from constantly thinking.

The following Sunday saw, gathered on the race-course, in the beautiful park of Maisons Lafitte, the élite of Paris, such as had not been led away by the fever of sea-bathing, German waters, or green gambling-tables. All those who had their country-places in the neighborhood, had come in to witness the solemnities of the race-course that a new fashion had caused them to patronize; and, whose rarity in Paris life at such a time of year, added a new zest to them.

All Paris was there! so the reporters said—a presentable enough number! But then, our two young school girls were not hard to please; and there were there assembled, in a narrow spot, enough of luxury, elegance, and notables from different countries. These lines of splendid carriages, these crowds of horsemen, touching their caps as they gallopped by on their blooded horses, and these innumerable promenaders, increasing every moment, gave to these unsophisticated girls a brilliant idea of the world to which they had been so suddenly introduced. Nothing seemed needed to increase the brightness of this fete, of which the horses were the pretext, much more than the real end.

Paris had adopted the turf for some years as the arena for a rivalry of toilets, where female extravagance gives itself full liberty, where they no longer appear dressed, but costumed; where the most fanciful is the most admired; and they try to produce effect by the exaggeration of their disguises. Of this, the masquerade contagion in broad day, and under the full light of the sun, had seized all the world with the thundering rapidity of Asiatic cholera. No person was spared.

Women whose rank, name, position, family, and age, ought to have preserved them, yielded as the rest. Their headdresses were guantlets—their mien bold! One might say that the demi-monde had swallowed the other. But Mlle. Derville did not even know what the demi-monde was, and she was astonished at a thousand things no one thought of explaining to her, they were so used to them.

She saw superbly-dressed women, who were saluted with a smile, or with the hand. Others that they seemed not to know, although the winking of the eye she discerned as they passed, showed plainly enough they had many friends in the crowd. Jeanne was as pure as the last fallen snow on the highest peaks of the Alps, where no foot had ever trod. Never had the suspicion of evil glided into her soul; but there was at this moment something in her surroundings that vaguely disturbed her.

This inquietude is, in itself, dangerous, and to be avoided at all risks. We ought to preserve the young souls committed to our charge from it, for it always detracts something from their heavenly purity, even though one who is destined to live in the world, with the world, and by the world, cannot forever escape its pernicious influence and deleterious corruption. One can only delay the moment of that great high trial, for it must always come—a necessary initiation, fixed by fate, and inevitable! During the four days since Jeanne left Saint Denis, she had received more new ideas than during the long calm years she had lived within its walls. But these ideas were as yet confused and uncertain. All at once the light broke.

M. de Blanchelande had conducted the ladies to the enclosed stand. There was no other place possible for one of his rank to go. But the rush for the place was so great, it occasioned such

confusion, that all the groups became mixed. Jeanne and Victorine were surrounded by young men, gay friends of the baron, who, notwithstanding the difference in their years, spoke to him with great freedom. Several knew Victorine; and, in their manners, they did not show that deference that would have been found in their fathers, thirty years before. As for Jeanne, she was a novelty, an enigma they were trying to solve. Her beauty was so original that it piqued them. She was unlike anything they had ever seen. In place of their mouths, which dared not speak, they employed their eyes, which spoke evil; and the pure young girl felt that such homage was not flattering, so devoid of delicacy and respect. She saw, or rather felt, something rude and bold in them, which shocked her. She was wounded, not flattered, by this ardent desire, eager, violent, intruding. She instinctively understood that a lady was entitled to a different attention.

The races ended without accident or incident. They improved the horses without injuring the men; which is not always the case on these perilous trials, where millionaires, bearing the finest names in the heraldry of France, take the place of jockeys, and risk their necks twenty times, to be told they mount almost as well as Jack or James, Tom or Dick.

Instead of returning to Paris, they went to dine at a neighboring villa, where the baroness (who had not yet taken the "sportmania") was to meet them. They found there a charming improvised sociable; all the flowers they had seen blooming on the turf in the morning. Mme. Delisle, whom her friends, since she had become rich, called Mme. *de l'Isle*, was the mistress of an elegant mansion. It would be hard to find a handsomer one in the financial world to which her husband (now retired) had belonged for so long a time. Her soirees were considered of note in the whole "Chaussée d'Antin," where her splendid home was situated. She also received in her country-house, and her invitations were supremely select. Still young, rich and pretty, Mme. de l'Isle loved to surround herself with young and handsome people. She did not endeavor, by contrast, to triumph too easily; but, on the contrary, believed that nothing heightened beauty more than beauty itself; that the more a woman was charming, and able by her brightness, elegance and distinction to add to the charms and prestige of her soirees, the more considerate she would be of her own interest. A glance showed her that Jeanne was a valuable recruit.

She was equally kind to Mlle. de Blanchelande, whom she had known from childhood, but she showed a flattering preference for the orphan. Jeanne did not yet know enough of life to distinguish clearly between appearances and sincerity; she accepted all that was offered, as they offered it. She was at the age when one believes all they see, and did not try to look too deeply. She entered the world with an artless candor and a soul full of ignorance and of poetry, of freshness and of illusions. All seemed good and true to her. When one has never themselves deceived, how can they dream of doubting others. Used to the stern simplicity of the little convent of Saint Denis, Jeanne was dazzled by the magnificence of the table service, which was remarkable, even in Paris. She confessed to Victorine, who sat by her, that she did not know the names of the dishes they handed her.

But she remembered too well the English café, not to be sternly on the guard in respect of the wines. During the whole repast she drank only water, slightly colored with wine, which caused the baron to smile. This was the only allusion that he ever made to the misadventures of the first evening.

Some young people arrived, after dinner, from the neighborhood and even from Paris.

"I hope we can get up a little dance," said Mme. de l'Isle, to the young girls.

"Oh! this is a regular take-in," said the baroness, interrupting; "you did not notify me, and they are dressed for the races; just look at their heads!"

"Allow me, then! with such hair as that!" and she took a red rose from the table and twined it in the midst of the brown waving bandeau which coquettishly revealed Mlle. Derville's left ear. "You are as pretty as an angel!" said she, kissing her neck, "and you will make so many conquests this evening, you will not know what to do with

them;" and turning to Mlle. de Blanchelande, who she did not wish should feel neglected—

"It is your turn now, darling! What say you to these corn-flowers? Ah! forsooth, as we have none of Constantine's flowers, we are obliged to put up with those given us by the good God."

"I am no harder to suit than yourself," said Victorine, lowering her head, whilst Mme. de l'Isle united the blue flowers to the blonde hair with both skill and taste. "Well, little ingrates," continued she, looking at the two girls; "Confess that I am very good to thus arm you against myself; for truly I am your natural enemy, since you are young and I am old; and yet, I work with my own hands to make you handsome. This merits something from you—at least a little friendship—don't you think so?"

"I felt that already for you," replied Jeanne, with a charming smile, "but you must not make yourself out better than you are. You know perfectly well you have nothing to fear from us, nor from any one. You would be considered the most beautiful everywhere!"

"You flatter me, little serpent! but you do it so sweetly that I must forgive you. Go on! you cannot hinder me from loving youth—which is invaluable. But see, they come. I must go to the parlor. You can stay here till the first waltz or quadrille. Just think, the gentlemen are still at their segars, when they could be in your company. Men have gone! France is lost!"

"Is she not charming, Victorine?" said Jeanne, watching Mme. de l'Isle, as she advanced, with slow, majestic steps, to receive a mother accompanied by four daughters. "I am mistaken by four *partners!*"

"All Mme. de l'Isle's sweetness don't amount to much," replied Victorine, rather maliciously.

The three parlors were soon filled.

Expectations of pleasure lightened the eyes of the young girls, and their little feet impatiently beat the time on the carpet. The men, unfortunately, were less enthusiastic, and turned a deaf ear to the first invitation waltz. It required the reiterated summons of the mistress of the house, to draw them from the corners, where they seemed to have taken refuge; the younger apparently the most indifferent. Now-a-days one is blasé at twenty! It is true they regain, sometimes, their illusions at forty—when it is too late.

Jeanne was destined to pass through a succession of surprises, to-day—from what she had heard from her schoolmates who had cousins, she imagined men were always polite and attentive to women. What she saw the early part of this evening dispelled the illusion.

The ice was broken by degrees, as they became animated. The musician was skilful. He could play some captivating strains. By eleven o'clock in the evening, everything was arranged. Preferences showed themselves, sympathies arose, their choices were made. Each cavalier had his favorite partner. Sociable reunions permit what Goethe choicely calls the "elective affinities," as he does us the "attractive atoms"—doubtless because it is by "atoms" we are caught. The German commenced at twelve, and generally lasted till four. It was led by a young officer, who was destined to run a brilliant career on the staff, and who began his conquests in the drawing-rooms.

The German cotillion is a dance by itself. It includes all others. It gives the greatest license to fancy. In its complicated figures, the most artless debutantes usually pass for the most finished coquetes. They dance at Saint Denis—I will even say dance well there. Jeanne especially was noted for her lightness and grace. But they do not dance the German. More than once Jeanne was embarrassed, but participants in a dance always repair gracefully such mistakes.

In this lively tournament of coquetry, where each lady contests, as in the open lists, the palm of elegance, of grace, and of beauty—where they offer the flower, or throw the handkerchief to the favorite—the debutante received all flattering homage. They made her queen of the ball; and we know with what eager attention they are surrounded who have received the "rosy crown" of this ephemeral royalty. It is a point of honor never to leave her in her seat. They ran for her, from all corners, and she passed from one to the other, fluttering lightly between their arms, with the

happy smile of a first triumph. The glowing excitement lasted till the end of the ball. Jeanne returned to Paris giddy with pleasure.

For the first time she had breathed the captivating incense of flattery and praise. By degrees, she had been led to hear many things, that the day before she would have believed impossible any one could have said to her. This was not all. They had commenced by touching slightly her fingers to form the lines of the English chain; and they had ended by pressing in their heated arms and to their agitated breasts, this virginal, chaste figure, that had never known the touch of man. They spoke at first of her exquisite beauty, her enchanting grace, and her infinite personal charms, in a low tone—the eye finishing the discourse, and expressing more than the words.

We have never been accused of Puritanical exactness, and do not pretend that there was absolute evil in all this, in itself. God has not created beauty to be hid under a bushel; and if he fills men with such lively admiration, it is not that they should conceal its expression in the depths of their soul. But Jeanne had always lived, until now, far from this bold demonstration of passion, which, if not openly expressed, allowed itself to be understood. A few days away from her cloister had sufficed to throw her into a sphere of ideas and sentiments until then entirely unknown to her soul. She did not yield entirely to these feelings, or abandon herself unreservedly to these ideas. Neither did she repel them; but gave herself up in some degree to the unknown sensation and fascination. One can say, without any exaggeration, that a very young girl does not leave a ball-room as she has entered it.

She leaves there somewhat of her ideas of purity. The world insinuates itself into her and captivates her. She asks herself if the life she led until then was really life. She finds it singularly colorless and cold compared to the one she sees before her.

They drove silently to Paris. Mme. de Blanchelande was annoyed at retiring so late that it was early; Victorine had a bad headache from dancing too much; the baron did not sleep. Seated opposite to Mlle. Derville he tried, by the uncertain light of the lamps, to catch the expression of Jeanne's face, which had engrossed him all the evening, though he had not spoken to her. Jeanne, with closed eyes, listened to the interior voices, repeating the sweet words that had been murmured into her ear.

As young girls always do on returning from a ball, she reviewed her partners who had tried to make themselves agreeable to her.

It is true, none of them had made a lasting impression on her mind; they passed and repassed before her eyes as half-effaced silhouettes. She distinguished no one more than another, happily for her, for she was, at this time, in such a state as to render over excitement dangerous. Jeanne had a lively imagination, its ardor nothing had yet diminished; but, on the contrary, it increased and developed, thanks to the life she led until now. But this quick imagination delivered up her young soul without defence to the enticement of the world and of life.

Imagination, when reason guides, when experience rectifies, is the most precious gift of heaven. It embellishes existence by coloring it. It clothes the slightest object with an illusion which idealizes them; but its digressions are fatal.

In youth unused to govern it is often an ally of the enemies who attack us. Imprudently we carry them in ourselves, and they open the citadel to our assailants.

Jeanne Derville felt now the first symptoms of this vertigo of pleasure which few young girls have entirely escaped on entering into society. She felt, so to speak, the paroxysm preceding a fever, which was to be as sudden as violent. It was no longer the time to think of the future. The future, with its fated engrossments, and the terrible weight of her destiny now disappeared from her mind. The life she had led for some days, in a brilliant circle, rich and elegant, and for which all said she was made, seemed so sweet to her that she came to believe it was hers by birth and right. One might say, it was the life she ought always to lead. As to the means of continuing it, she did not ques-

tion herself. Without even perceiving it she was precipitated in a rapid declivity. She rolled there like a stone towards an abyss. Life was a dream for her now. The awakening would be very hard, but the dream was sweet and the sleep deep.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUCH was our young heroine's condition of mind, when the baroness, who had made all her purchases and replenished her wardrobe, declared suddenly, the day after the ball at Maison Lafitte, that no one was in Paris; which was very true; and that staying any longer in the city was intolerable.

But the baron, on his side, declared that there were workmen at the chateau, and it would not be ready to receive them for two weeks. What should they do for fifteen days, when the August sun burnt the trees in our walks, drank the last drops of water from the dried-up Seine, and made our sidewalks smoke? Victorine remembered, very fitly, that her father had promised to take them up the Rhine; and the colonel announced himself ready to do so.

Jeanne clapped her hands, and prepared her album; to see this old river, this poetic cradle of the most charming fables; with its picturesque banks, covered with ruins, and with legends; where the grape ripened, and where the song was created. This was to realize her most earnest wish. Victorine joined in the chorus, and her delight was as great. A word from the baroness put a check to their joy. Mme. de Blanchelande was not well the evening before. We know that women always have at their disposal a malady and a doctor. The one brings the other. The doctor received the order to prescribe at least a dozen sea baths. This he did with the best grace in the world. The baron could but endorse as an irresponsible and docile minister.

"Very good!" said he to his wife; "as you wish! When would you like to start?"

"As soon as possible."

"To-day, if you wish."

"That is too soon; but to-morrow."

"Let us go to-morrow. But, if you please, may I know where we are going—to Dieppe, as we did last year, or to Boulogne, as the year before?"

"Neither; to Trouville."

"Agreed! for Trouville!" said this most complaisant husband.

Trouville is certainly one of the most brilliant adjuncts of Paris. It is the adopted country of great luxury and of earthly elegance. A summer capital, where we meet on the seashore, those we have met before in the saloons. Mlle. Derville did not know this. No one had even spoken about it at St. Denis; she only knew that Trouville was in Normandy; and her heart beat as she thought of the Rosery. Victorine, who knew better the geography of pleasure and the map of fashionable excursions, in a few words explained this to Jeanne.

"Trouville, my darling, is the most charming place in the world. The country and the sea, the sea and the country. Balls twice a week; and dressing four times a day."

"Alas!" said Jeanne, with a sigh, "I have only three dresses."

"They can send them to you from here by the dozen."

"And who will pay for them?"

"Nonsense! there are yet plenty of bank-notes in the little green leather porte-monnaie. Are you really mean, Mlle Derville?"

"Would to heaven that my means would permit it," replied Jeanne, with a smile, under which you could see a little sadness.

"Do not think of it, then," said Victorine, kissing her. "When you have no more, my father will lend you some."

"How can I repay him?"

"That will be thy husband's business."

"Do you believe all poor, young girls find husbands willing to pay their debts?"

"All? No!—You? Yes!"

Jeanne shook her head with an incredulous air. Alas, however, in her happy moments, she flattered herself that she would end, sooner or later, by meeting that phœnix, that enchanted "Prince Charmant," of whom young girls dream, rich, beautiful, noble, brilliant, who comes and takes them by the hand, and leads them with him under the blue heavens, into the country where the

lemon tree blooms, and where one has only to look in order to be happy. But, in truth, if this was an illusion, was not Jeanne, to a certain extent, excusable? Was there not in her everything to justify her ideas?

The only time she had been brought into contact with young men, those among whom, after all, there are the chances to obtain husbands, had they not shown her the most eager attention; had they not surrounded her with abundant homage to give her the right (she who did not know how rare the race of marrying-men has become) to conceive the most joyous hopes.

It was in this state of mind, favored still by the high spirits and brightness of Victorine, that the former scholar of St. Denis descended from the railway-car on the shore of Trouville.

The season was in all its brilliancy, in all its whirl, I would say in its climax of fever.

This marine station, favored by the world of elegance and of fashion, the rendezvous of the aristocracy of all countries, during the summer months, reunites a flying squadron of those rich and idle women for whom any excuse is sufficient which will enable them to exhibit their eccentric appearances, their rash experiments, and their fantastic risks. They make, in truth, four toilets a-day, as Victorine had predicted. And what toilets!

Sometimes they wore long trains dragging an ell behind them, in order to sweep the pavements, which were too much neglected by the authorities of the place. Sometimes, on the contrary, the skirt was coquettishly raised, so as to display the limbs enclosed in little yellow boots. Then, again, the dresses opened in front, like a coat, and were cut into a long basque in the back, reaching below the waist. The head-dresses were of infinite variety, so ingeniously arranged as to give to the most pure faces a shade of daring lasciviousness and audacious challenge. These were sometimes caps, with chevalier's feathers, stabbing at the heavens, like a colonel's plume! Mousquetaire hats, of the style of Louis XIII., which allowed two feathers to float on the shoulders, one red, the other white; or, perhaps, a plain cap, like a little boy's, with a straight rim, giving to the most proper young lady a swaggering and tom-boy air, which delighted her—the unhappy one!

The first time that Jeanne saw from the terrace of the "Salon" (the name which the Normans give to their Casino), the brilliant crowd, fantastic and variegated, she thought it was a masquerade, although it was not the exact time for the opera balls. If at this perilous entrance into life, she had been better guided, if she had only been left free to follow her own instincts and natural good taste, the daughter of the colonel would have appreciated this licentiousness without curb, and this unbounded irregularity. But Victorine applauded; the baroness did not condemn; and, besides, after all, the very willing victims of these ruinous eccentricities were noble ladies and virtuous young girls, belonging to good society, sometimes having the highest rank, name, position; all, in fact, that was necessary to dazzle and lead others. When examples come from such high rank they are somewhat dangerous. I am mistaken—they are dangerous above everything! The contagion is terrible and inevitable!

Victorine was attacked first by this plague, and so violently that she yielded immediately. For her, whose life was perfectly independent, and whose means were abundant, this was probably but a slight evil. Jeanne, on her part, was seized almost at the same time, and more violently, if possible, than her young friend. One easily persuades themselves that, at all costs, they should make up for too long continued abstinence; or, to express ourselves better, she was carried away so naturally, by the attractions of the world, that one could really believe, until now she had been wise only because she had no occasion to be otherwise.

These few weeks at Trouville, in the midst of this overwhelming fascination, finished the fatal transformation so rapidly commenced in Paris. Jeanne came away another being. No one would have been surprised more than herself at this metamorphosis, had she had the time to observe it. But, gracious! where can one find the time when they make four toilets a day? All one can do is to dress and to undress! Hardly, in the intervals, can the most

diligent chat a little. Only one thing could have retarded Mlle. Derville in the declivity she was descending; that would have been the sensible, devoted affection of a friend, older and more experienced than herself. But this affectionate control was absolutely wanting—as she wanted, alas! almost everything. She was one of those whose childhood has endured the most irreparable of all evils—the loss of their father and mother.

An unlooked-for accident had placed Jeanne, when she left the institution, in the heart of an agreeable family; rich, in good society, and, on the whole, rather good than bad; yet, who needed, most certainly, good sense and judgment. How could they do for others, what they could not even do for themselves?

M. de Blanchelande, a man as gay as he ever was, and whose middle age had only one care—a repining for his youth—could not dream of warning his daughter's friend against a danger to which he would willingly have pushed her himself. Certain defects became a charm in his eyes. The baroness was still too much taken up with herself to suspect others, and besides, for a long time she had seen only through her daughter's eyes. What she did was all right; and it never entered her mind that any one could think it evil.

It is thus that poor Jeanne rashly staked her life on a foolish throw—which, if she lost, did not even leave her the chance of a recovery. But no one dreamt of this, neither she nor those around her.

She was, for the first time, launched into the midst of a world whose existence had no aim; where all hold from day to day, letting things go as they would, not one voice being raised to recall her feelings to the stern realities that awaited her.

The balls in the saloon, the concerts on the beach, the horseback rides, the walks, the drives through this enchanting country, so adorably beautiful, the sociable soirees, where all were intimate, followed each other with unfailing rapidity. The two friends passed from one fête to another, and their days were a round of pleasures. Since she had left Saint Denis, Jeanne, who before, would have said as the old Roman: "I have never passed a day of my life without learning something"—this Jeanne had not opened a book! and we must confess, although this avowal injures our heroine, that she accommodated herself perfectly to this idleness. It is easier to lose than to gain the habit of industry. She lived in the world, and for the world, as if she had done so all her life. She felt at her ease, and in her natural element, in the very bosom of this atmosphere of never-ending coquetry where they had plunged her. Adulation and devotion were now necessary to her; and if they had not come of themselves, before, she would have missed something!

She and Victorine were the queens of the evening balls, and like all queens, were surrounded by courtiers and flatterers.

The world sometimes shows instincts of marvellous sagacity. Although these two young girls were always accompanied by a gentleman of the best society, and by a lady who was the mother of one of them, and of whom no one had ever spoken lightly, they guessed they were not sufficiently guarded and protected.

All the class of adventurers who frequent watering-places, followed them with an eagerness of which they would not have been proud, if they had understood the motive.

There are always, in such assemblies, one or two lions, as they like to be called, who draw the attention and the devotion of all available cavaliers. I do not wish to push too far for the analysis of masculine sentiments, nor to pretend that this fact alone roused such lively contention for the privilege of dancing two waltzes or three polkas with such or such a young lady. One allows himself to form venturesome opinions and rash judgments. I only say, that generally these beautiful mundane constellations, who form the ornament and brightness of our charming summer fêtes, disappear some evening by unknown ways, and are lost in infinite loneliness, far from the blessed heavens where shine the stars which preside over the marriage service.

But neither Jeanne nor Victorine could contemplate such a dark future.

Both just entering life, both in the spring time of their youth, in the bloom

of their beauty, in the glory of their triumphs. How could they dream of a sad future? "The grasshopper chirps all summer," she does not cry hunger before the north wind arrives; and the two scholars from St. Denis were yet in the May month of their life, where they felt only soft winds full of sweet murmurs and gentle caresses.

In this loving and agreeable temperature, in which the young girls developed as plants forced by heat. No serious or grave thought could be raised, and nothing came to snatch them from this whirlwind of intoxicating pleasures, by which they had both been carried off. They were proclaimed the two queens of this brilliant season by unanimous acclaim of the electors of twenty-five years. They soon engrossed all the admirers, who followed them on the shore, waited on them in the saloon, and contended for their words, their looks, their smiles. As they both had success enough, and as each received equal attention, there had not been a shadow of rivalry between them; and jealousy, that destroying worm of female friendship, found no hole to glide into their mutual affections. Nothing troubled the joyousness of their days most truly woven with threads of gold. Why would not such a life endure for ever?

CHAPTER XV.

THE baron, meanwhile, received a letter from his steward saying, that the workmen had finished at the Chateau de Blanchelande, and that the noble house was now ready to receive them.

This news reached Trouville the night before a grand ball, which had been talked of for some time, and for which one and all had made preparations for attack and defence, and were arranged for assault of luxury, of elegance, and of coquettery.

The young girls prayed M. de Blanchelande, who was not naturally inflexible, to give them this one evening more. He consented. Mariette, the waiting-maid, used all her powers to heighten their grace and natural charms. She succeeded in making them two little wonders. Their entrance into the soloon was hailed as a great event. The news of their departure had spread abroad, and threw on the pleasures a slight veil of melancholy. It might have been called the Fête of Farewells.

Their admirers who had been the most devoted to them for the last two weeks, pressed their fingers on leading them to their places, or raised their eyes to heaven, according as they were of an audacious character, or of sentimental humor.

"I believe I have made four conquests," said Victorine to her friend, as she left her at her room door. "And you?"

"Ah, me! I believe it is a fact that I have as many, thank you," replied Jeanne, laughing. "But we are going away; the world is large. Who can tell if we will ever meet them again! The little vicomte is very agreeable, however, and the young baron had the prettiest moustache you have ever seen. You will not find such again. Oh, it is a shame we are going away!"

"They will know where to find us if they really love us."

"Yes, that is so."

"And if they do not love us it is no great loss."

"That is just what I said to myself."

"Among them all has any one offered himself?"

"I believe that two or three had a great mind to do so."

"Only the mind! Then we have lost our time."

"Do not fear, however, we will soon reach Blanchelande."

"Where we will see them no more."

"Where we will see plenty of others. Good-night!"

"Do not dream of the little vicomte!"

"Do not weep for the young baron!"

The next day a train on the branch of the western railroad, recently established, which passed along the rich banks of la Toucques, and plunged into the valley of Auge, carried our beautiful friends from Trouville, made them skim over the green fields of Caen, and conducted them across the forests of l'Orne to Mans, from whence they reached Orleans.

The baron's carriages met them there, and took them through a route bordered with laughing fields; amidst which, in all directions, they saw beautiful houses

and aristocratic residences, half hidden by the shadows of the large parks which led them to Chateauneuf. There they crossed the Loire, to gain by a gentle slope the first table-land of the Sologne.

M. de Blanchelande's estate was two leagues from the river, situated among grand and romantic scenery, from which it received its name.

It was a remarkable place, of vast extent. A country, in the midst of which were large bare places, where you could see only the bright and sterile whiteness of sand.

Here and there, in the sides of the hills, long trails of heath floated on the wind or glistened in the sunlight with a brightness as glorious as that of the snow on the top of the eternal glaciers. As far as the eye could reach was a barrier of white rocks, which the vision could not penetrate. This too great uniformity one soon became accustomed to, and ended by loving. These heaths, mounting high under the evening or morning breeze, were perhaps connected with the moving tableaux of waves breaking on the strand, opposite the Rosery, at the foot of Mount Saint Michel. This was the first impression of Jeanne Derville, when she saw them.

Here all comparison ended; for, instead of the evident fertility of Normandy, instead of those grand and beautiful pictures of fruitfulness, amidst which the daughter of the colonel had been reared, she found at Blanchelande nature, wild, uncultivated, stern. On the hills around the chateau was a belt of scrubby trees, which had neither the noble aspect nor the serene majesty of the chestnuts, of the oaks, nor of the century elms, which strew their shadows on the valley of Avranches; but the spruce, with their eternal greenness, and their dark pyramids; the juniper tree, with their cones of a lighter shade; the spice tree, almost black, and the laryx, almost white, gave to the landscape a poetic shade of melancholy. They gave out, morning and evening, an odor slightly unpleasant, but healthy and invigorating.

It seemed as if the soul, as well as the body, would be better here.

For those troubled beings who have lived too fast—that the world often makes—this would be a healthy residence, bringing to their entire organizations fresh and soothing influences. The impulses of passion give place to calm counsel, which seems to speak louder here than elsewhere. One could not have chosen a better earthly retreat after a season of prolonged balls. Our heroine, coming out of the dissipations of Trouville, would regain herself in the wastes of a salutary solitude.

The chateau had been the work of several centuries, and though showing an assemblage of strange detail, was, on the whole, rather imposing. La Renaissance, with her lavish hands, had left in this part of France many proofs of her passage, and had stamped, with her aristocratic elegance, certain portions of this imposing edifice. More ancient parts bore the marks of the dark ages on the stones, and others, more recent, served only the purposes of practical utility, and declared, by their disdain of the picturesque, that they were the work of the present era.

Our travellers arrived at night, as if the baron had purposely selected the most favorable time for the young friend of his daughter to be struck by the first sight of this unexpected novelty.

It was a splendid night, slightly cold, as it always feels on reaching high table land, but filled with brightness and auroral rays. The stars were twinkling by millions in the deep blue of the heavens.

The carriage had driven for half an hour on a road through the woods. From time to time an owl flew from one tree to another, flapping in the air her wings mute and downy, whilst the plaintive cry of a curlew coming from the distant sea and reaching the bogs, alone interrupted the silence of nature. A long, irregular avenue, passing through a wood of birch whose trunks, glistening and shining like silver, resembled ghosts clothed in white shrouds, led up to the chateau.

Here and there, judicious openings in the trees allowed a glance on the vast brightness above, of which some grand spruce tree formed the natural centre.

The baroness, fatigued by her long journey, had fallen into a sweet slumber. Victorine, familiar with this spectacle, so beautiful and romantic, and slightly tired of it, slept like her mother. Jeanne, of a nervous temperament, alive to all feeling, and easily excited,

had not eyes enough to admire all that presented itself before her. Softly, for fear of awakening her companions, she lowered the glass of the carriage and breathed the invigorating perfumes which were thrown out from these woods at night. A ray from the moon struck her face at this moment, making resplendent the marble whiteness of her forehead, the proud and noble outline, and the fine, delicate temples. Thus seen under this veiled light, bluish and fantastic, she was indeed charming—and no one saw her!

I am mistaken. Two eyes were fixed on her face with magnetic tenacity, which, they say, ends by conquering more feeble wills, and so forces them to yield to a higher power. But, before this mysterious and indisputable influence had time to work on Mlle. Derville, who did not seem in the least to yield to it, the carriage stopped, and the two sleepers awoke at the same time.

"We are here!" cried Victorine, clapping her hands.

"So much the better," replied the baroness, who had found the life they had led the last few days very tedious.

All the doors of the house were opened. A crowd of servants carrying lights surrounded the carriage, lowered both steps at the same time, and all got out.

"Behold thee at our home," said Victorine to her friend, whilst they unpacked the boxes. She took her by the arm, and made her walk on the grass all wet with dew to the exact spot where she could get the most favorable view of the chateau.

Lighted by the moon, which, better than all the painters in the world, seems to understand artistic decoration and picturesque effect, the grandeurs of the manor defined itself darkly on the bright night, with an appearance of majesty which struck Mlle. Derville.

"Oh, how splendid it is!" said she, pressing Mlle. de Blanchelande's hand.

"Will you be able to live here?" asked Victorine.

"With thee I could live anywhere."

CHAPTER XVI.

JEANNE opened her window at an early hour the next morning, to breathe the sweet, fresh air.

Her room looked on that part of the park where the largest sheet of water was situated—Blanchelande was noted for these beautiful waters. Frothy springs, hidden in the deep woods, they expanded into a thousand little silver rivulets, descending from rock to rock, and leaping in irregular cascades, then running over pebbles between mossy banks of cresses and fontinales, feeding that little oval lake which Jeanne saw under her windows.

On its tranquil bosom floated slowly two black swans, in the midst of a flock of teals and ducks, in color of the emerald and the sapphire; some water rails and mud hens, with their brown, glossy feathers resembling black birds, built their nests on the borders, between the sea rushes; whilst a kingfisher, darting from the midst of the reed grass, by its piercing cry drew attention to its rapid flight and shining wings.

Jeanne looked a long while at this romantic scenery—she did not close the window till she felt she was catching cold.

"Surely," said she, "one can live happily here."

The whole day was employed in settling themselves. The next Mlle. Derville felt as much at home as if she had been born at Blanchelande, and lived there all her life.

It was a different life from that at Trouville, and it was a better one.

It was a country life, healthful, natural, copious, fertile, slightly vegetative. A life Jeanne had never known; but one that was better for her than any other after the long work and severe discipline of Saint Denis.

They scoured the country, and the country was beautiful. There was always something new for Jeanne to see, and for Victorine to see again.

Sometimes Mme. de Blanchelande desired to go with them, then they drove. But generally she stayed at home, and they went on horseback—a pleasant exercise that they both loved passionately, as most ladies do.

The baron was an admirable horseman, and he became their instructor,

and taught them both the accomplishment with equal care. Excepting, because he saw Jeanne was far less advanced than his daughter, he offered to give her some private lessons. Victorine resolutely opposed this, pretending that she would not allow her friend to take away the only advantage she possessed over her.

M. de Blanchelande's good nature had caught him, and he was in for it; so he continued to be their chevalier, serving equally his daughter and his daughter's friend. Thus passed nearly a month, peaceably and without the least incident.

Living in the sun and open air, they lived, or allowed themselves to live, without care or thought. No one spoke to the orphan of her future, and she herself gave no heed to it—so precarious, however, and so uncertain for her. The life she led was sweet and good; would it not last for ever, just like this friendship?

Suddenly, the noble manor assumed a new and unknown animation; they went and came from top to the bottom of the house; they opened chambers until now closed up; the major-domo assumed important airs; in a word, everything announced the expectation and approach of a great event.

"Do you expect to receive the Pope? or the Emperor?" asked Jeanne, one evening.

"Not that I am aware of; but the time has come when *we* visit from chateau to chateau. In this country we visit each other's houses a good deal. My father, like the fiery Nimrod, is a great hunter! We shall have some grand hunts in the woods. Fanfare, the whipper-in, sounds a horn, as the Paladin Roland. You will see how we amuse ourselves!"

"And is this *all?*" said Mlle. Derville, piercing with her clear look the eyes of her friend.

"This is all," said Victorine, with apparent simplicity; "and I find it enough. What more do you want?"

"Nothing, indeed! it is enough."

Nevertheless, the baroness took particular interest in her daughter's toilet. Two cases of dresses arrived from Paris; and the dressmaker, who had the easy task of adorning this charming person, sent three hats of the latest fashion; one of them, with its brim coquettishly raised, was named "a love," by Mlle. Marietta, the waiting-maid. As for Jeanne, they considered hers fresh enough, or else they did not wish to force her to make a new sacrifice; they also had the discretion not to mention in her presence anything about having ordered the things at all.

The guests were expected in series, positively; as at Compiegne, or at Fontainebleau.

The first series did not delay their appearance. It was composed exclusively of the rich proprietors, accompanied by their wives and their children, to whom were added some high dignitaries from the adjoining villages.

Jeanne did not require much penetration to perceive the immense distance which separates the world of the Provinces from the world of Paris. Everywhere until now, they had treated her on an equal footing with Victorine; they had noticed she was young, beautiful, graceful and well-educated. This was enough, no one dreamed of asking more; and all the world judged her equal to figure in a quadrille with a duchess. But the Provinces require more! They are never in favor of the suppression of passports. They take too good care to assure themselves that you are all right. They wish to know your *business*, and your connections; what you are; where you come from; where you are going to; what you possess—and this last question is not the least important one.

Our inquisitors, whom nothing escaped, soon knew that although Jeanne belonged to a good family, she was entirely destitute of fortune and would be obliged to support herself by using the education given her by charity.

"The Blanchelandes will not always keep her," said, disdainfully, with scornful lips, the mother of two great big stupid daughters she had found hard to get rid of; "it seems this princess will be reduced, after vacation, to the position of under mistress in a boarding-school, or a companion or reader to some great lady; unless she prefers to run about giving private lessons in French—a very agreeable situation, truly!"

From this moment Jeanne was judged, sentenced, executed; and a line of demarcation—at first almost imperceptible,

but more definite from day to day—was drawn between her and the guests of the chateau. Women (whose rivalry nothing can disarm), were particularly hostile to her, and they knew how to manifest it in a thousand little things. A *coterie*, spiteful, mean, very persevering in these wretched assaults, tormented her inch by inch, and although it was all intangible, it was very painful. The daughter of the colonel had never endured any suffering of this character; it was the first time that she had felt the thorn under the rose. She felt that life was less desirable.

Let us assert that the family whose hospitality Jeanne had received, did not enter into these sad plots. I do not doubt but they would have foiled them, if they had noticed what was going on; one could only reproach them with not taking care enough.

Victorine was entirely devoted to her friend, and the little insinuations, more or less charitable, they made near her, were absolutely lost.

Mlle. Derville saw all this, and her friend's constancy was a great comfort amidst her annoyances. But women are so ingenious in causing another woman to suffer, that Victorine could not always furnish the remedy for these ills. There were, besides, many things she did not notice; she was also much engaged with household duties, which she shared with her mother. When she had embraced Jeanne, saying: "Thou art charming, and I truly love thee, darling," she imagined this was enough, and her thoughts turned to other things.

The young men, carried away by the grace and beauty of Mlle. Derville, remained uninfluenced by their mothers, sisters, or even cousins, and devoted themselves to her with great ardor.

But Mlle. Derville was more annoyed than pleased by these devotions, which seemed now only an importunity.

"All this because I am poor," said the orphan, with secretly bitter feelings, which amounted almost to agony, at times; she now first tasted the world as it really is, this world of which she knew so little! she caught a glimpse of real life, and her thoughts turned towards Saint Denis with mingled sadness and regret. At Saint Denis, notwithstanding the weariness of such a long seclusion, she had enjoyed to the highest extent, the pleasures of friendship and the triumphs of self-love.

There at least, they did not ask what she *had*, but what she *was;* and as she was the most intelligent, the most industrious there, her place was in the first rank, and no one dreamt of disputing her right.

When some of the mistresses, who were taught by experience the true state of social life, and who foresaw the unhappiness her natural ambition would bring upon her, which was so little in accordance with the necessities of her position, tried to forewarn her of the dangers and trials of the future, she accused them of ignorance or exaggeration.

When one has not been thrown much on the world, and has lived in a narrow circle, they see things from only one point of view. Jeanne was still the scholar of Saint Denis! she looked willingly enough upon life as a succession of competitions, each one more arduous than the next, and becoming more and more difficult, but where the most desirable prizes were always decreed to the most worthy, and these difficulties with which her young life had constantly contended had been unable to daunt her courage or her energy. I know no idea more false than this.

The poor child, ignorant that to gain prizes in the world, merit is judged only by rank or possessions. Too often, those who have nothing count for nothing. Observe what the guardians of our childhood ought to warn us against, the deceptions of the future. But if they did so, they feel they would lose their influence and discourage our efforts. All have to endure this awakening, its risks and perils; for some dispositions the trial is hard and very painful; Jeanne was one of these.

She suffered then, and suffered much. But her true dignity caused her to hide all this, and she showed a calm, serene brow to all around. On close examination they could see she was rather cold and repelling. She often declined joining the gay parties organized at the chateau, and often after dinner, instead of remaining in the parlor to play or dance, she would plead indisposition and retire to her chamber.

"Do you not think," said the baroness, with an unpleasantly jesting manner, "that this little Jeanne has become suddenly very peculiar?"

"Want of early education," replied some charitable neighbor; and forgetting her, they then talked of other things.

About midnight, as Victorine was retiring, she knocked at Mlle. Derville's door, and found her reading.

"I am delighted," said she, with slight maliciousness, "to find your headache did not last long. What tincture of lime water do you take?" added she, turning the leaves of the serious book in which her young friend had been so feverishly immersed.

"Pleasures are your life—work will be mine," replied Jeanne. "Let us each follow our destiny."

"Your destiny will be what you dedesire. But listen to me. You must not read any more. You will spoil your beautiful eyes."

At other times, Jeanne, on the contrary, would stay in the parlor; and as if she wished to pique the men by her indifference, and humiliate the women by showing it was only necessary for her to appear to bring all their adorers to her feet, she would seat herself at the piano, and play polka after polka, waltz, and quadrille, with a spirit, ardor, and forced gaiety which duped every one.

"What talent!" said a young, enthusiastic man.

"She is fortunate in having talent," was the reply of a young girl.

"Yes, indeed," continued the mother, "for this may enable her to gain her bread."

Meanwhile, Jeanne remained at the piano, as if she were a poor artiste, hired for the evening at ten francs. When they were not dancing, she skimmed the notes of ivory and ebony lightly with the tips of her fingers, and they seemed to reply to her and talk with her. Sometimes, taking her hands from the keyboard, she thoughtlessly raised her sleeves, thus displaying her beautiful white arms. Then again, throwing back her neck, she leaned her pale and noble head against the dark oak panel. She would lower her eyes, and the shadows of the beautiful lashes moved slowly on her cheeks, whilst she thus remained engrossed in her own thoughts, gathered into herself.

At these times she was certainly very beautiful, and even a superficial observer could discern the treasures of the mind, and of restrained passion. At these mo ments, more than one heart was disturbed.

It is a fact that anywhere but in this crushing atmosphere of the provinces, the storms surrounding her would certainly have burst; but in the provinces the passions do not kindle into open war, because each one schools himself, and observes for himself whilst restraining and observing others.

It is there—mutual compression!

CHAPTER XVII.

IN the meantime, M. de Blanchelande, still young, notwithstanding his great big daughter, younger still in character, though married for twenty years, had not been able to live for so long in the society of this beautiful and charming creature, congenial to him from the first, without becoming more and more interested. The difference in their ages, and her perfectly pure nature, had until now prevented Jeanne Derville from having the slightest suspicion of this growing passion, which was hidden in darkness and enveloped in mystery. For a young girl, reared with the principle of pure, noble morality, the idea of love is absolutely inseparable from the idea of marriage. She could not conceive the possibility of one asking for her love who could not demand her hand in marriage. The baron, on his side, was surrounded by too many chains, watched by too many eyes, to risk the slightest imprudent step. He was too good a judge of situations, and had too fine an appreciation of character, not to understand the spirit of his daughter's friend, and to feel certain that she would not listen to him now. He was therefore forced to respect and love, by this proud, loyal young girl. He could do but one thing—wait! But he was at that time of life when to wait is cruel, and to be patient is difficult.

Patience is only possible for those who have time and hope. M. de Blanche-

lande was troubled in restraining himself. Jeanne's conquests—although she disdained them,—the effect she produced on all the men so much younger than himself, did not precisely aid him in this self-conflict. These kind of battles are the most cruel of all.

One thing alone rendered calmness more easy. It was the coldness and complete indifference Mlle. Derville showed to all. He frankly acknowledged to himself that he could not have endured a rivalry, in which the advantages would have been entirely on the other side.

As to these little cavils that had been raised against Jeanne, he began to notice them, and felt much irritated; but he did not allow his anger to transpire, for it would have gratuitously compromised him with his wife. To hold Jeanne up to-day would have risked losing her to-morrow. He contented himself in surrounding her with delicate and thoughtful attentions. We ought to say that Jeanne showed him only an absent-minded gratitude. The grand question of the future (forgotten for a moment), presented itself to her mind, that sorrow had now rendered more serious, and surrounded with all the frightful problems that she inexorably throws on an orphan without fortune. Her confidence in others being shaken, she felt she could not rely on them, and this view was not consoling. It was not the moment when she could notice the antiquated gallantries of the baron.

CHAPTER XVIII.

M. DE BLANCHELANDE arranged a hunt about the middle of September, which was to be the event of the season. He loved these *runs*, which were real triumphs for him; for he there displayed, under the eyes of all, his most brilliant qualities of cavalier and of hunter; he vowed, moreover, that this day he would surpass even himself. The keepers came beforehand to perfect all the arrangements. They had turned out a superb deer—he was encircled in a thick wood, the start from which would lead them at once into an open country, usually magnificent. The crops were cut, and nearly everywhere gathered—the route was free and open, and they hoped for an unexceptional run. All looked favorable, and the baron flattered himself Jeanne would be conquered by the view of his exploits.

He was therefore terribly disappointed when, on the morning of the start, Mlle. Derville announced her intention of remaining at home.

"Oh, you are not in earnest! Every one is going!"

"Allow me then to differ from the rest."

"But it is for you I have arranged this little party."

"I am very grateful, though I cannot quite credit this."

"How dare you say you do not believe me, when you know all I do is for you—you little flirt?"

"I a flirt? You know perfectly well that I am not."

"That is true! You are only an ingrate."

"Ah! how am I ungrateful—will you be kind enough to state?" replied she, with some dignity.

"Behold! I am wrong! You are neither ungrateful nor a flirt. There! are you now satisfied, you wicked one? But it is a fact, I was up this morning before day; I galloped your favorite mare Florine for an hour, that she might be safe for the start and docile through the chase, and now you will not come. Oh, mademoiselle, this is too bad!"

Jeanne shook her head.

"Go quickly to your room, and put on that becoming little hat and your riding habit."

"I ought rather to put on my travelling dress."

"The travelling dress! And why so, in the name of goodness?"

"To go away."

"You to go away! You are out of sorts this morning, my beautiful Jeanne. You go away, indeed! you cannot dream of such a thing."

"Indeed I do dream, just of that."

"You really wish to leave Blanchelande?"

"Did you think I could spend the rest of my life here?"

"Why not?"

Jeanne shrugged her shoulders, and gazed out of the window.

"Let all this alone. Be kind," con-

tinued the baron, taking her hand; "and do not give me pain who have never given you any. Come to this hunt—I beg for it."

"Still, no!" replied Mlle. Derville, with more firmness than M. de Blanchelande had ever known; "I must renounce all, at once, bravely, without looking back at this life not made for me. I must regain the habit of work, which you have caused me to relinquish, and which I should never have lost.

"I myself am not born," continued she, with a sad, but not bitter firmness, "I am not born for these pleasures without end, these unceasing fêtes of the world's enjoyments. My path in life is distinctly traced—it takes me from you—let me follow it."

Whilst Mlle. Derville spoke thus, with an undoubted sincerity, M. de Blanchelande felt a sad surprise. Jeanne had not only inspired him with the love a young beautiful creature can so easily cause in the heart of man, but, in spite of his light nature, he felt a sincere interest in her. He had, until now, reflected very little on the future which was before the orphan; or, rather, he had a vague, unacknowledged plan, which had, at least in his eyes, the merit of releasing her from the cares and vexations of real life.

He thought that things could last a long time as they were; that Jeanne could easily remain with them till Victorine's marriage; and when this moment came, the baroness, who adored her daughter, would feel the separation bitterly, and would like nothing better than to keep near her that daughter's friend—the amiable, good creature, whose rare qualities she had already appreciated. Some other things would then arrange themselves—that were already arranged in the baron's head. But the idea of Jeanne's leaving, had never crossed his mind! And to set out to-morrow, or next day, as she proposed! This threat made him no longer himself. He could not reply at first; he only muttered some unintelligible words, among which the young girl could only distinguish:

"Oh, no! this is not serious! you cannot wish to do so; and if you do wish it, you cannot do it."

"Indeed," replied she, "I not only can, but it is my duty, and I will!"

Whilst she was thus speaking, the baron took one of Jeanne's hands—she had no reason for immediately withdrawing it—and before she dreamt of hindering him, he quickly raised it to his lips. At this instant, a certain Mme. de Letang, bristling disagreeably, with the pretensions of being a musician and a beauty, and from that double claim, a particular enemy of Mlle. Derville, entered suddenly into the parlor where this little scene was enacting, and retired not less precipitately, with the carriage of the shocked modesty of a woman who has seen something outrageous.

"Peste take her!" said M. de Blanchelande, with an energetic gesture of bad humor, letting Jeanne's hand fall, which he had held still pressed to his lips.

Without wishing Jeanne to observe, he at once understood the false conclusions a malevolent person could draw from an affair so apparently compromising; although in reality the most simple and innocent in the world.

As to Jeanne, she did not see so far, and did not fear anything, for her conscience was perfectly clear; still she was vexed by this instinctive feeling of proud modesty and chaste reserve which is so natural to a young girl, who would suffer in her inmost soul if she supposed any one suspected her of the slightest familiarity with a man.

"She will not speak of it," said the baron, awkwardly enough, moving a little away from Jeanne.

"And pray! what do you expect she will say?" quickly replied Jeanne.

Victorine came in at this moment, with red gloves, hat on, whip in hand, followed by three young men who were to escort her. Neither of them noticed the annoyed manner of the baron, nor the slightly embarrassed countenance of Mlle. Derville.

"Why! you are not ready!" said Victorine. "Except papa and yourself, all are mounted! We will start without you."

"Without me," replied Jeanne, "but not without your father!"

"Why is this caprice? for it is a caprice, is it not?"

"No, indeed! I am in pain, and I need rest."

"As you please!" said Mlle. Blanchelande, rather put out. And she departed like a whirlwind, followed by her three guardsmen.

The baron went out last, and whispered Jeanne as he passed:

"Do you know you give me great pain?"

Jeanne made no reply.

The cavaliers and amazons were arranged in charming groups on the steps; the groom held some low short-legged Irish cobs with large strong reins; also some Morvan mares with fine strong limbs, eyes full of fire, and deep breasts; and the keepers held by leashes the dogs, which struggling to free themselves, filled the air with their deep baying. In a few minutes all were in saddle, and the little troop, with a flourish of trumpets, left the court in a joyous, brilliant disarray. In a quarter of an hour the huntsmen sounded the "bien-lancé" from the depths of the woods.

CHAPTER XIX.

JEANNE, when all alone, went to the park, seeking relief from melancholy thoughts. She turned to a sheet of water they called the Black Pond, where she had taken many solitary morning walks. She soon seated herself under the shade of some elder bushes (on a rustic bench), whose brown shining berries attracted the greedy blackbirds. She crossed her hands on her knees, lowered her head, and was soon lost in thought, interrupted from time to time by echoes from the distant chase. She reviewed in memory all the events in her short but well-filled history. She thought of her mother, so early removed, whose vigilance and care nothing could ever replace. Of her father, whose aid she had lost, when most in need. Of the laborious but peaceful years passed at Saint Denis—thought recalled, that Victorine and herself had then loved each other devotedly, and she wondered if the feeling was as intense now. Turning her reflections from the fading past to the present, she was discontented with the baron, with herself, and secretly irritated against Mme. de Letang, whose dangerous hostility she anticipated. If she only could take refuge in the future, and console herself with hope! But, alas! she knew too well there was no future for her, and she could not allow any hope. Under the influence of these sad ideas, that nothing broke in upon—Jeanne yielded to sad premonitions. Her eyes filled with large, barely restrained tears. Suddenly she raised her head and listened. The noise of a galloping horse was heard coming through the park, along the hedge that sheltered the young girl in her sad reverie.

This horse, Mlle. Derville reflected, could not belong to one of the hunters, for the chase had taken the opposite course. The road the unknown traveller was taking was a private one, passing only round the chateau, and was used solely by the baron and his intimate friends. Rapidly and instinctively, Jeanne dried her tears with the back of her hand, and sat motionless on the bench; her first idea was to go away, but she remained. What importance could this new arrival have for her? It was undoubtedly a friend of the Blanchelandes' but a stranger for her. Another indifferent one—among so many indifferent ones!

As he drew near, the horseman slackened his speed, and when he reached Jeanne, stopped as if he had divined her presence.

"Well, what is the matter? Why does he not go on? Can he accidentally have seen me?" And tremblingly she made herself as small as possible, and crouched behind a tree.

After a few moments of silent, eager investigation, the stranger must have seen the hat and dress of the young girl across the bushes. Intensified by the autumn sun, for he jumped to the ground, tied his horse to a tree, and Jeanne soon saw a human form spring through the hedge into the walk of the Park in which she was seated.

Mlle. Derville felt her heart beat violantly, and most earnestly wished she was in the shelter of her own room, or the parlor of the chateau. She tried to rise, but soon seeing how useless and unwise it was to fly, she remained seated,

but very pale. It was the first time she had ever been thus alone with a man.

This one was certainly not very frightful. First, he was young—that always reassures a woman, and especially a young girl. Then he seemed gentlemanly; well made; of high mien and noble bearing. He was of a noble race, with rather a modest, timid manner, which was very perceptible. The handsome stranger stopped when he came near the young girl. This gave Jeanne time to examine him rapidly, and in secret. The examination was not unfavorable to the new-comer. We have stated he was young—only twenty-four or twenty-five years old. He was large, blonde, with an open countenance, which expressed a great air of frankness and loyalty. Even where women find themselves in a critical position, nothing escapes them; they notice everything. Jeanne made this flattering observation, that the young man was perfectly dressed. We might, perhaps, have said that he too closely resembled a fashion-plate; but at this time of her life Jeanne had a great affection for fashion-plates. It was, indeed, with great effect that the stranger wore a black velvet vest, buttoned over his breast; knee-breeches of white duck, imprisoning the leg and showing its perfect outline; boots with innumerable wrinkles reaching to the knee. The little velvet jockey-cap with its straight front would have been unstylish on any head but his, but it seemed to suit wonderfully with his straight features and rather curly hair. A pretty hunting-whip, finished off with a gold whistle, completed this costume, perhaps a little studied, but perfectly successful.

After the first glance at the person who had entered her presence in this singular, unexpected manner, Mlle. Derville turned her head away very unaffectedly, and remained silent and immovable in her seat, waiting. The young man took off his hat and approached, holding it in his hand. When he was near enough to enter into conversation, though far enough off not to wound her self-respect, "Madame or mademoiselle?" said he, with a voice deep and full, though sweet and gentle, and stopped.

"Mademoiselle," replied Jeanne, while a light smile flitted across the corner of her serious mouth.

The young man came a few steps nearer and stood still. He was nearly as much embarrassed as herself, yet it was with the perfect ease and courtesy of a man of the world that he addressed her. "Mademoiselle, allow me to introduce myself, as there is no one here to perform that ceremony. I am a neighbor. It will not be much more out of the way," said he, gaily, "than the extraordinary manner by which I have entered your park; but all is tolerated in the country."

Jeanne silently looked at the hedge.

"Oh!" said he, laughing, "I have not injured the enclosings, I have only broken the branches. As I have just stated, I am one of your country neighbors—the Count Maxence de Bois-Robert;" and he looked closely at Jeanne, to see what effect his name would produce.

Jeanne was perfectly unmoved.

"I live at my mother's chateau, which I suppose you have seen, but I have been absent for five years, and only returned two or three days ago. When I arrived, I found a polite invitation from M. de Blanchelande for to-day. My mother advised me to come, and here I came, thank God and her. Fortunately, or unfortunately, I started too late, endeavored to regain lost time by taking a short cut, which deceived me, and have forgotten the road, which I never was very familiar with. This is the cause, mademoiselle, that instead of entering by the gate ('He that entereth not in by the gate,' &c.)"

"You have come through the window!"

"I am ashamed, but not sorry," replied the Count de Bois Robert, bowing to Jeanne with much grace. "Since I find myself in the park, I cannot be far from the chateau."

"You are really very near—it is just behind this group of chestnuts—if you move ten feet that way, you can see it."

"But how can I get there with my horse?"

"Go along this hedge, then turn to the left; about five hundred feet from here you will find the avenue. You cannot get lost this time, as you say you

did just now," replied she, with some irony.

"It would certainly be inexcusable, since you condescend to point out the road."

After saluting Jeanne respectfully, he tried to pass through the hedge.

"Sir! oh, sir! I have given you bad advice—very unintentionally. They are now mending that road; the bridge across the little stream which runs through the corner of the park, over there, is broken down; and though there is very little water at the bottom of the ravine, it is too deep for your horse to cross."

"What shall I do?" said the young man, with a childish air, as if to solicit Mlle. Derville's pity.

"Well, mon Dieu, you must take the long way; I see no other means."

"By the woods of Hirondelle?"

"Certainly; it is the only route."

"You do not mean that—it is almost two miles around?"

"Oh, that is nothing for a blooded horse!"

"Suppose I wish to join the hunt? though *now* I do not care much about that," said he gallantly.

"Oh, that is another thing! the hunt is at the end of the park."

"Exactly opposite to where you were sending me. Oh, mademoiselle, you are not charitable!"

"Please to remember that I have sent you nowhere. If you choose to force your horse to take a jump of twenty feet the road is at your service, and I will not detain you."

"I see that perfectly! but I detain myself. Twenty feet! That is the devil's jump in the old legend. This hedge seems less unpromising, and I know Ferragus well enough to be certain he will not leave me behind."

"I am sure of that; but this will be a bad example for him and the robbers."

"I must then go round," said he, in a piteous tone.

"Or go through the gate."

"Oh! I should prefer that; but where is this blessed gate?"

"In this little bunch of juniper and fir trees."

Jeanne arose and walked before the count, who could not but notice her beautiful figure and her dignified carriage as she passed a winding path which was made through the underwood leading to the road. They soon reached the little gate, which Jeanne opened with a key she found hidden in the crevice of a tree. Maxence went for his horse, which neighed when he saw his master. He unfastened him, placed the reins on his neck, and patted him gently, talking as if the horse was an intelligent being and could understand perfectly what he said. He returned to Jeanne not less astonished at his own temerity than at her sudden confidence in a perfect stranger.

"You have done a good action," said he to Mlle. Derville; "for which we both thank you—I and my friend Ferragus."

The horse, hearing his name, neighed again, turning his large liquid eyes on the young man, then followed like a dog, the reins hanging on his neck, his head lowered, scenting his master's steps in the grass.

The young people walked side by side. Maxence looked at Jeanne; he had a great inclination to offer her his arm, but dared not; so they walked silently along, happy, perhaps, in their youth and beauty—happy also, perhaps, in being together.

The park was large—unproductive land is not measured with a greedy hand, and they shape largely the surroundings of a pleasure house in those countries where the land is not very fertile.

The Baron de Blanchelande had omitted nothing which could charm, strike, or please, and had united grandeur with beauty. The perspectives were skilfully managed; the accidents distributed with art; everything planned to produce the finest effects; the copses of trees formed of the most beautiful growth of the forests.

The count praised with reserve and discretion, but with taste, as a man who felt nature and loved it.

Jeanne secretly approved of all he said, and his manner of saying it also.

When they reached the chateau, both felt as if they had been friends for twenty years. There are periods in life when friendship makes rapid strides.

An exclamation of delight escaped Maxence on reaching a certain point overlooking an immense panorama.

"It seems to me," replied Jeanne,

with a bright smile, "considering you are a neighbor, you know very little about Blanchelande!"

"I have not been here since the death of my father, whom I lost when quite a child," said the count, in a serious, moved tone.

Jeanne thought of the same trial she had herself experienced, and a deep shade of sadness overspread her countenance, which had just shone with joy and brightness.

Maxence recognised this sympathy she seemed to feel in his sorrow, and thanked her by his looks.

"Since this sad event I have always lived among strangers; this will explain to you why the nearest neighbor of Blanchelande knows less of the place and its inhabitants than any man in the country."

"You must now make up for that, sir," said Jeanne, who was courteous in her character of hostess.

"Oh, mademoiselle! that is just what I desire to do," said, emphatically, the young man.

They entered the principal court. An old domestic, who recognised Bois-Robert, ran to meet them, uttering exclamations of surprise and pleasure.

"Ah, count! how glad the baron, madame, and all the rest, will be to see you!"

"What! is it you, old Jacques? well! but how young you always are, notwithstanding thy"—

"Sixty-five years, count! sixty-five years, well told!"

"Mademoiselle, this good man used to wait in my father's house, and has often jumped me on his knee. Ah! I have changed much since then, old Jacques, and you must have a good memory to recollect me."

"I have the memory of my heart," replied Jacques, looking at Maxence with simple admiration pleasant to behold.

A groom took the horse. Jeanne invited her guest, the Count de Bois-Robert, into the house.

"Where is madame?" she asked the waiting-maid, whom she found in the parlor, in a low tone.

"Madame is in her own apartment, mademoiselle; she is very tired, not very well, and desires to rest."

Maxence did not hear, but he understood the reply, and did not seem afflicted beyond bounds at this little accident. But he felt it would be indiscreet to prolong this tête-à-tête with a young girl, who might hesitate to dismiss him.

"Mademoiselle," said he, "I do not wish to trespass on your kindness; Jacques will point out the direction of the hunt, and I will try to join them."

"Go," said Jeanne, with her most beautiful smile. "Their breakfast is to be at twelve, on Pheasant's Island, a name of happy augury; I would not cause you to miss the first stroke of the fork—you have walked far already."

"Or my horse."

"Would you like the stirrup cup?"

"The chatelaines of old always poured it out for the chevaliers," replied Maxence, charmed with the sweet manners of the young girl; "and I cannot refuse to take it from your hand."

She invited him into the dining-room, followed by Jacques, who placed on the corner of the heavy oak table, a bottle of Bordeaux and a flask of Madeira. Jeanne helped the count, with the sweet natural grace she always displayed.

Maxence accepted, with a gratified air which showed in his face. He had that which generally pleases young girls, and puts them at their ease, namely, no pretensions, and something good and affectionate, though dignified, about him.

One saw that he respected women as much as he loved them.

Jacques had retired, with the discretion of a well trained servant.

The count tasted, with sage deliberation, the bait held out to him by Jeanne, and sipped the glass of Spanish wine with an appearance of sensual investigation which would have done credit to the most finished gourmand. He knew he must set out with the last drop.

Seated opposite to Mlle. Derville, he looked at the high wooden carvings; on the pictures of the hunts; the portraits of the victorious horses in the most celebrated races, ornamenting the panels of the dining-room; then he looked at Jeanne, admiring the bloom of her youth, the frankness united with intelligence, and the fresh, unsullied brightness of her mind.

Near her, "he took no note of time," and unnumbered hours would have

passed by. A frightful clock, whose invention he sincerely cursed, recalled by its determined tones—even to those who desired to forget it—that time always marches.

"I must go," said he, in a tone of regret that equalled the most gallant compliment.

"You have only just come," said Jeanne, who did not wish to give a more direct reply.

"I am going away—to return. We will meet again."

"Certainly; at dinner."

He held out his hand.

"English fashion, then," said Jeanne, giving him hers.

"No! like the French!" And he kissed the sweet delicate hand of Mlle. Derville, whose color rose to her cheeks. In obedience to the young girl, the groom brought Ferragus—Maxence leaped into the saddle and galloped off. He turned on reaching the gate, and seeing Jeanne still standing at the dining-room window, he flung her a farewell with the ends of his fingers, which could only resemble a kiss, and disappeared.

Once out of the court, he spurred the noble Ferragus, who went at such a speed as quickly to bring him to his destination. Maxence's thoughts passed rapidly; he was in a species of whirlwind.

He was under the influence of this unexpected meeting. He discovered Jeanne was adorable, and he wished to tell it to the trees of the forests; to the stones on the road; to the birds in the bushes; to the bubbling river. There are times when the full breast cannot keep things to itself. It overflows and pours out just as flowers give out their sweet perfume.

"Yes, by my faith!" said he, striking his horse with the flat of his hand from time to time, "she is the most charming creature I have ever met; and if I did not know the impossibility of love at first sight, I should believe myself in love. I do love her—perhaps! she is beautiful, intellectual, grave, and playful all at once. She has spirit—much spirit! and she must be good. Goodness is written on the sweet smile of her innocent lips, in the clear sweet look of her deep honest eyes. Go on! I am not unfortunate."

Maxence raised his head with a proud movement, expanded his chest, as if to breathe more freely the fresh, healthy, invigorating air, perfumed by kissing the balsamic branches of pines and firs.

Jeanne, left alone in the chateau, was as much engaged thinking of him as he of her. The one of the other—they were already him and her, a new delicious feeling, a troubled unknown charm filled the young girl's breast. Her heart beat violently, her face flushed. She experienced her first emotions of womanhood. And this emotion was not like the pleasure of mere coquetry she had felt in the soirées at Trouville, when the fashionable young men, with pearl-colored gloves, and hair parted in the middle, had displayed their insipid gallantries.

Maxence had not praised her in the least; he had not inflicted the impertinence of a compliment.

But praise was in his manner—compliments in his looks. And thus, whilst others were so quickly forgotten, she declared she would not forget this one, even if she should never see him again. Never to see him again? This was already an idea she could not dwell upon. But she would see him again. Would he not stay some days at the chateau, like the rest? But then he left like the others, and he must go then—would there not be a void in her soul? She asked herself this fearfully. The idea of love did not, however, enter into her mind; she had never imagined love could be so sudden. Love ought and could only come with time, and only after the man had surrounded with attentions the woman whose love he wished to gain. After that he should "have courted her," as they said at St. Denis, where the older ones, as in all boarding-schools and convents in the world, sometimes touch upon this grave subject. These rather deep convictions lulled Jeanne Derville into a false security. If she had truly believed that what she now felt was real love, all that she had been told about this fatal sentiment bringing such a train of evils, would certainly have frightened her, and put her on her guard.

Whilst doubting nothing of this new sympathy, so full and sweet, she yielded to it a singularly dangerous confidence.

CHAPTER XX.

THE Baroness de Blanchelande, since she had had two young girls living with her, adopted the excellent plan of making them take the cares of the house in turns.

To-day Jeanne was on duty.

A palace would not have been too splendid or magnificent for him. She foraged in the park and the garden; gathered the most beautiful flowers; cut the most elegant branches, and made a garden of the dining-room. Her bouquets were doubtlessly true-love poems, where each flower, like the "eastern selam," was charged to bear a declaration to the young and beautiful sultana. She spread the table with the richest silver and most brilliant glass, and examined with great care the bill of fare the cook had sent for her approval.

These thousand little nothings, which in truth make up the great whole, filled and engrossed the day, which would have seemed like an eternity without them. When the whole house was ready, she said it was time to think of herself, and with an art, or rather instinct of coquetry (whose secret she had lost for the last few weeks), she made an exquisite toilet. By the manner in which she arranged her hair alone, one could divine the woman who loved, and who wished to be loved. When all was finished she glanced at the mirror, and, for the first time in her life, thanked God that she was beautiful.

Whilst Jeanne took all this trouble for a man unknown to her until this morning, Maxence also had his share of surprises and emotions.

He had been able to inspire Ferragus with his ardor—for the horse found wings. He reached the rendezvous at the moment they were drawing the first cork.

A branch of the little river which passed alongside of the chateau de Blanchelande entwined Pheasant's Island in its humid folds. A ferry-boat passed from the shore to the island. Bois-Robert found the groups of hunters arranged in the most picturesque living disorder, around an immense venison-pie. The conversation was lively, the gaiety noisy. It was the moment when tongues unloosen, the cheeks flush, confidence is born between convivialists, elbows are touching. The company were seated on the ground; the gentlemen waiting attentively on the ladies. Two deer, hanging from the boughs of a birch tree, towards which the hounds turned every few moments their eager noses, showed plainly enough that the first part of the chase had been successful.

Maxence threw his bridle to a groom, got into the boat, and soon rowed to the island.

"Who comes here?" asked the Baron de Blanchelande, not recognising his young neighbor.

"Oh! it is the Count de Bois-Robert," said one of the hunters, who had met Maxence a few days before.

"Indeed, I had invited him—a little by chance—for I was not certain he had returned." And whilst speaking he went to the water's edge.

Maxence jumped on shore.

"You have got back at last," said Victorine's father, holding out his hand. "We have been anxious to have you, and now it is mid-day when you reach us! After all, you come from so far."

"From Rome; but I lost my way; and if I had not been fortunate enough to meet——"

"You can tell me whom you met directly. Allow me first to present yon to these ladies."

The arrival of the handsome young horseman interested the ladies, as an unexpected event. The name of Bois-Robert ran through the groups. They knew he belonged to one of the first families in the country; that he was heir to a large estate. Fortune was favorable to him, and all were prepared to give him a warm greeting.

Victorine, who was the hostess, since her father gave the breakfast, arose and took a step forward, to show Maxence, by this mark of attention, that he was welcome to Blanchelande.

"My daughter," said the baron, still holding Maxence's hand. And turning to Mlle. Blanchelande, "Victorine, Monsieur de Bois-Robert!"

Victorine, though it was only a month since she left Saint Denis, was no longer

a school girl. She raised her eyes to Maxence with the air of sweet playfulness that was natural to her, and was ready to add a few words of welcome to those of her father, when she saw a peculiar disturbed expression, almost anxious, on the young man's face.

Maxence, who was entirely unused to self-control, and whose emotions were strong, withdrew a step, and looked attentively at Victorine and the baron. They saw he wished to speak, they felt he had something to say, and they also guessed he dared not do so.

"Your daughter, mademoiselle?" murmured he, with a bewildered air.

"Certainly! undoubtedly!" said the baron, so astonished that he should misunderstand.

"I thought—it seemed to me—I had seen her at Blanchelande?"

"Ah!" said Victorine, quickly enough, looking at her father. "He has seen Jeanne!"

"Jeanne! Who may Jeanne be?"

"Jeanne Derville, an old schoolmate of mine!"

"Indeed!"

All this had passed aside among the three. Maxence, though deeply annoyed, made a strong effort to recover himself, and succeeded so well that no one noticed what he felt.

"Come to the table!" said the baron, seating the count on the grass by his daughter and opposite himself.

All took their places, and tried to make up for lost time by satisfying their lawful appetites, which had been sharpened by the fresh air of an autumn morning, and a magnificent chase through forest and field. The commotion caused by Maxence's arrival was soon over, and the fun and gaiety which reigned over all a few moments before, soon commenced with renewed vigor.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE most dazzling hopes had danced before the eyes and passed through the mind of Maxence, when he had mistaken Mlle. Derville for Mlle. de Blanchelande. He left the chateau, his heart overflowing with the exuberance of happiness that we, alas! experience only in early youth! and that life, by its stern treatment, soon renders us incapable of feeling. On learning that Jeanne was not what he supposed, and that the one he had taken for the daughter of the Baron de Blanchelande, was only a poor orphan, without position or prospects, he felt an acute pain followed by deep anguish of heart. He blamed this capricious, unjust, stupid destiny which distributes her favors so foolishly, making the unworthy rich, and leaving those poor, at whose feet he would have thrown all the treasures of the world!

But this was not the time for the expression of such sentiments, however just they might be. He knew there were a thousand reasons for prudence and caution—that the least forgetfulness would be followed by the most serious results. He said all this to himself. But he was at the age when caution is painful—circumspection difficult; and he wished himself anywhere than by Victorine's side.

Every one knows the powerful, irresistible effect of the Arabian bean, so fortunately discovered by a goat; of coffee, in a word, which refreshes so gratefully our worn-out strength, and galvanizes our exhausted nerves. Maxence, after drinking a cup, sugared and heated to perfection, felt his natural animation and gaiety return. The aroma of the Mocha is a sovereign magic incantation. It chased the blue devils far away! It occurred to him, that after all, he had not so much to complain about, because he had walked five minutes in the park, eaten a biscuit and drank a glass of wine with a young and pretty girl. Greater evils than that might happen to him.

She who had introduced him to the chateau was not, it is true, the daughter of the Baron, as he had at first supposed. But what difference was that, after all? It is for herself, not for her father, that a woman is loved. Love! Is it then really true, that he loves this Mlle. Derville, whom he has barely seen for an hour? And if he should love her, was he not free to choose as his heart directed? Undoubtedly. Still, nevertheless, he frowned more than once! A cloud passed over his brow, usually as smooth as a child's!

A fox surprised in a hole where he

was taking his noon-day siesta, started a few steps from the group where the count was seated. The yelps of the dogs, the neighing of the horses, the horns of the grooms made one of those concerts in which the echoes of the woods rejoice!

All started. Maxence was carried away by the general movement. They set off on a gallop. His troubles fled for a time. Yet soon his memory brought back Mlle. Derville's charming image. He impatiently drove it away. When it had gone, he brought it back again, much astonished at his powerlessness to turn away from it.

The fox does not lead one so far as the wolf, which is brought down four or five miles from her starting point. He feels his limbs and breath insufficient for such a desperate race. So he tries stratagem, makes a thousand turns, bewilders the dogs in the woods, and often ends by defeating them.

They lost two or three hours in the pursuit, and gained nothing. The successes of the morning condoled them for the ill luck of the afternoon. The baron, seeing that the sun was setting behind the grand purple curtains edging the banks of the Loire, gave the signal of return.

It was night when they reached the gate of the chateau. It grows dark soon in the fall. The horns calling off the hounds, sounded like a triumphal march. Some peasants carried the deer, on branches of the birch tree, ornamented with its leaves.

Mme. de Blanchelande, who was as fond of ostentatious display as her husband, had ordered torches to be lighted and carried by the servants before the hunters, through the court.

Jeanne--moved, excited—stood alongside of the baroness on the last step of the splendidly illuminated flight.

The rays of the torches tinted the pale marble of her face. She was beautiful at this moment, with the adorable beauty which comes from the blooming of the soul, on the face of a young girl who finds herself in love, as the fresh, pure bud of a flower opens to the spring. Bent slightly forward, her hand resting on the balustrade, she tried to penetrate the brilliant, noisy groups in the main court, searching there, alas! unconsciously, for the stranger of the morning —already no more a stranger for her.

Maxence, who had not seen the baroness for several years, required no excuse for his eagerness to join her. He threw his bridle to the first groom he saw, and mounted first the two flights of massive steps that separated him from Mme. de Blanchelande. It was Jeanne, however, he looked at, and as he met her again, he felt return in their strength and freshness the first impressions which were engendered in the morning when he had met her.

He saw that the countenance of this sweet creature, which had seemed grave and rather sad, was now beaming with joy and youthful gaiety. It is in youth alone we taste unreflectingly the emotions of happiness. Later, we dare not.

Whilst Maxence was thus reflecting, Jeanne's observations were of an entirely opposite character. It seemed to her that the air of frankness and good humor she had seen in the young man was now replaced by a restrained and frozen manner which gave her pain. Although she noticed the fact, she could not divine the cause, and consequently felt a vague sense of uneasiness.

Maxence and the baroness were still exchanging their polite welcoming speeches, when Victorine, who had been helped from her horse by one of her admirers, coquettishly raising her long skirt, joined the little group composed of her mother, the count, and Jeanne. Victorine was naturally the least suspicious person in the world. How did it then happen that she looked uneasily from Maxence to Jeanne, from Jeanne to Maxence? It seemed to her, that Jeanne was more beautiful this evening than usual—and this was true. The night before she would have rejoiced at this—why did it disturb her to-day? She was ignorant of the secret of this new beauty; she knew not that this glowing brightness, this sweet radiant smile, Jeanne owed to her incipient love. Still less could she understand the slight shade of sadness settled on Bois-Robert's brow, but she was nevertheless disturbed by it all. Could it be that Victorine loved Maxence? Not the least in the world—Victorine was in love with no one. All the young men who surrounded her were in her eyes mere satellites of

her beauty; but she could not bear that even one should escape her all-powerful attractions.

We must remember, besides, that for the last few days, Victorine had not been exactly as usual to her friend. This feeling of rivalry, so natural between women, as we are told, and which she had never before experienced, awoke suddenly in her soul. She had, however, lost none of the homage to which her vanity clung. So far from dreaming of winning them from the young châtelaine, Jeanne had received with most discouraging coldness those who tried to turn towards herself.

But although this was so, Victorine, warned by some secret instinct, divined for the first time in her friend an irresistibly powerful attraction—a hidden charm—which would render a contest with her more than dangerous. By not scattering her charms, Jeanne could bring all to bear on one point to gain her end—and suppose this end was the Count de Bois-Robert?

Indeed, no! that should not be—that could not be! The daughter of the Baron de Blanchelande would not permit it, cost what it would! She knew perfectly how to stop it. To begin, she would watch their every movement—nothing should escape her.

Jeanne was entirely ignorant of what was now passing in her friend's breast. Her frank, loyal nature never gave her the slightest suspicion. Her first thought was to throw her arms around Victorine's neck, and with all the sweet caresses by which young, pure girls pour out their overflowing tenderness, to relate her dawning happiness. To say to her: "Look at me—embrace me—feel how my heart beats! I am commencing to love—I do love!"

She was stopped by the cold manner of Mlle. de Blanchelande. She at once understood that the home of those charming friendly confidences which diminish by half our troubles, and double our joys, was gone for ever! She felt she must hide her thoughts from Mlle. de Blanchelande, whom she no longer called Victorine, and disguise from her the secret of her soul. The baron's manner rendered this reserve still more necessary. The little incident of the morning, that she had entirely forgotten, recurred to her memory. Her meeting with Maxence had thrown a new light upon everything: she took an exact account of a thousand things, not at first understood. "Love is the sun of the soul, it lightens up its deepest places." Hunters and huntresses ascended to their rooms to repair the disorders inseparable from a five or six hours' race across the fields.

Mlle de Blanchelande and Mlle. Derville, who had had all the day in which to beautify, remained alone in the saloon.

Victorine's mother seemed full of joy at M. de Bois-Robert's return to France, and though she did not confide in Jeanne, it was easy to see that the arrival of the young count coincided with projects readily divined.

The poor orphan experienced a vague uneasiness, amounting almost to anguish.

"How do you like the stranger, darling?" asked the baroness of Mlle. Derville, who, seated near her, capriciously let her heedle fall whilst working the points of a very intricate piece of embroidery.

"Oh, madame! I like him very much!" replied Jeanne, without raising her eyes.

"This seems to be the opinion of every one. Do you think Victorine will be pleased with him?"

"I think, madame, he cannot be displeasing to any one."

Whilst speaking thus, Jeanne dried a drop of blood which ran from her finger, cruelly wounded by her needle.

"Well done, you stupid little one! Why do you work so steadily?" said the baroness, taking away her embroidery. "One would say you had an appointed task. You are no longer at Saint Denis."

"Oh! why am I not still there?" murmured the young girl.

"Let us see if all is arranged," continued Mme. de Blanchelande, who did not hesitate to give an eye to everything, as mistress of the house.

On reaching the dining-room she could not restrain a gesture of surprise and satisfaction at the good taste and true elegance with which Jeanne had arranged the table.

"I had not ordered this grand array of silver, but you have had more forethought, and I am much pleased. To-

day nothing is too beautiful. As you have succeeded so well with these bouquets, you are decidedly the Fairy of the Roses. If I knew how to paint I would take you as a model for my beautiful flower girl. You give grace to the thistle, and you make the holly a pleasing plant."

I do not know what Jeanne would have answered, for the butler entered, carrying on a little silver waiter the cards with the guests' names, and a bill of fare.

"Let us arrange the seats," said the baroness. "I wish all to be satisfied to-day. By whom shall I place Mlle. Derville? I shall not know if she does not tell me, for I have been unable to guess, which of these young and handsome cavaliers please her the most."

"They all please me equally, madame."

"So much the better; I cannot go far wrong—hold! I will give you Monsieur de Jonzac on your right; he is rather young, but he ties his cravat so well! and Monsieur d'Egly on your left; he is a little old, but he is very polite, and has some mind—that you know will suit you."

Jeanne placed the two cards as the baronness indicated without replying. Mme. de Blanchelande continued to float around (as much as her silk dress would allow) behind the chairs already placed at the table, setting the cards on the plates decorated with stars, and displaying a motto in large red letter surrounded by the baron's crest.

"The marquise here right; the vicomtesse on the same side, four seats off—so that they can neither see nor hear each other."

Mlle. Derville could not help smiling.

"Oh! Victorine here and M. de Bois-Robert by her!"

Jeanne followed all the baroness's movements with eager attention, who, if she had looked up at this moment, would have been frightened by her paleness and the trembling of her hands. Fortunately she did not notice her.

At this moment the dinner was announced, and Mme. de Blanchelande hurried to the drawing-room, saying to Jeanne without turning her head, "Come, my beauty."

Mlle. Derville followed her with that pensive, mechanical obedience which is natural to us in some events of life, when it seems as if we had no will of our own. She looked in the glass as she passed, and saw how pale and changed she had become.

"And I thought I was strong!" said she, slightly shrugging her shoulders. She was truly strong, for she called all her powers to her aid, and conquering her sad feelings, showed to all a calm, unmoved—almost serene—brow.

It was easy for Jeanne to see that the arrival of Maxence at the chateau de Blanchelande was an important event.

Its first consequence was to disconcert all the young men who had hitherto had any pretensions for Victorine's hand.

We must confess that the young count did not look very triumphant. His first glance on entering the saloon was for Jeanne. His looks searched for her with a mixture of timidity and uneasiness which could not escape the eyes of shrewd observers.

But their sagacity was useless if they tried to exercise it on Mlle. Derville, for, taught by experience, she allowed nothing to be seen of this internal drama. She suffered, nevertheless, at seeing Maxence by Victorine, paying her the thousand little attentions that are the duty of a man of the world to the lady who is confided to his care, from the soup to the dessert,

It was a fact that M. de Bois-Robert's eyes were constantly raised to her face, seeming to demand pardon for these attentions to another—a delicate attention fully appreciated by Jeanne. Still she could not understand his constraint and embarrassment. If what she believed was true, if his feelings were perfectly loyal—honorable for him and her—why was he so careful to hide them?

However, these first blossoms of love's tenderness in her woman's heart brought her so much joy, that notwithstanding the secret tortures of her soul, Jeanne did not dream of regretting. She was consoled by the idea of the secret intelligence so quickly established between Maxence and herself. It pleased her to think they had a secret between them, although its only value was in being a secret.

As for Victorine, she took pride in the attentions and devotion of the count.

Her manners were haughty, and her looks said, "Do not meddle with him. You see he is entirely devoted to me."

These looks froze poor Jeanne, who felt slight shivers run through her frame. She was so engrossed by her emotions that she did not notice the baron was watching her with eager attention, which allowed nothing to escape.

The dinner was like all country dinners, where the guests are intimate, and etiquette and ceremony quickly thrown aside. They talked much—drank still more. When they entered the parlor their heads were light enough.

They had drowned in the sparkle of the wine of Champagne the fatigues of the morning, and all the young people, lively and alert, were ready for fun.

"My dear little one," said Mme. de Blanchelande to Jeanne, in a slightly imperious and patronizing tone, which admitted neither of reply nor refusal, "give us a little music this evening; it will be very kind of you. These ladies can dance."

The baroness was not spiteful, but she was a mother, and a hundred times more jealous for her daughter than she had been for herself. She had noticed the impression produced on Maxence by Mlle. Derville, and could not resist, even at the price of being cruel, the satisfaction of placing on a lower level and in a humiliating back-ground the one who might become a dangerous rival for Victorine. The blow told; Jeanne felt it. Under any other circumstances she would have disdained to retaliate, but she was nervous this evening, easily irritated, and before M. de Bois-Robert, would not, for all the world, allow herself to be imposed upon with impunity.

"Mon Dieu!" said she, in a calm, natural voice, but in a very decided tone, "I would do so with much pleasure, but I have been quiet all day, and my feet will not keep still. Victorine and I will take turns in dancing, and as I am the youngest," said she, rather maliciously, "I will play first."

Whilst thus speaking, Jeanne crossed the saloon, with the elegant dignified manner by which the goddesses were formerly discovered, when it pleased them to descend from Olympus, to walk on the earth.

The baroness silently bit her lips. The baron thought his wife displayed very bad taste in this, but he knew well that some evils are increased by the endeavors to repair them. He, therefore, feigned to see and hear nothing, remaining apparently ignorant of the little incident, which had been noticed in its slightest details by every one. He thought, however, he owed Jeanne some indirect amends, so he offered her his arm, to lead her to the piano, with an air of most deferential courtesy.

"What are you going to play?"

"A redowa."

"May I ask your hand for the first mazourka?"

"It is already engaged."

"To whom?" asked he with quick anxiety.

"To the man who wears the best cravat in France!" replied she, with a smile, indicating with a glance M. de Jonzac, who stood a few steps from them, in a window recess, alongside of Victorine, whom Maxence had unaffectedly quitted on leaving the table.

"Will you not give me my turn?" continued the baron, who wished to obtain pardon, if not forgetfulness, for his little temerities of the morning.

"Yes, indeed!—if, however, you will wait long enough."

"I will wait as long as you please, if you give me hope."

"Well, then, a quadrille."

"Ah! and at what time, if you please?"

"After you have danced with all these ladies!"

"You are rather hard."

"I have reason to be, but I am only prudent; I do not wish to arouse their jealousy. See, they now regard me as this black viper hidden among these vases of flowers, because of the five minutes tête-à-tête with which you have honored your humble servant this morning."

"Mme. de Letang? Oh! I would like to poison her!"

"I will not hinder you," replied the young girl, opening the piano; "but just now it is impossible to follow out you philanthropic idea."

The baron withdrew, without replying.

The ball commenced. Jeanne's white, delicate, skilful hands floated softly over the keys, quickened, rose, threw out offhandedly some loud notes, struck some

harmonies, played a prelude, and when every one was in place, commenced vigorously the quadrille, which was asked for instead of the redowa.

Maxence danced with Victorine. Mlle. Derville rose after the last figure, and walked over to Victorine, with an air of great gaiety.

"It is your turn now, my sweet one," said she to Victorine, laying her hand on her shoulder.

Victorine felt very happy at this moment; she was in the best of good-humors. She passed her arm around Jeanne's waist saying:

"You are right, I will play now."

The Count de Bois-Robert and Mlle. Derville were near each other, almost isolated, in the midst of the groups formed here and there in the saloon.

"Chance has brought me more than I dared to ask for," said Maxence, looking at the young girl.

'You ask very little from her," said Jeanne, without raising her eyes, but with a slightly ironical smile.

"And if I ask, not from her, but from you, the favor of the waltz Mlle. de Blanchelande is going to play, what shall be my answer?"

"That I have obliged you to do so; that it is a forced waltz!" replied she, with a burst of sonorous, soft laughter, which was not exactly the commentary of the sentence, but which served to distract the attention of two or three exquisite individuals, who listened as they passed, hoping to catch some fragments of the conversation.

Victorine took her seat at the piano, not very well satisfied. The piano, at that period, seemed made for mothers of fifty years, rather than for young girls of eighteen, and she resolved to stay there as few moments as she could. She played rapidly the first bars of Rosita Jeanne put one hand on Maxence's shoulder, allowing the other to fall into his extended hand, and they waltzed.

Notwithstanding the soirees of Trouville, of Maisons Lafitte, one might say it was the first waltz Jeanne had ever danced. The others went for nothing. The pure chaste young girl had never felt thus drawn near the breast and entwined in the arms of a young man, towards whom she was already drawn by the impulse of her heart; she had never before felt anything that in the least resembled this new, unknown, and all-powerful sensation. The young men she had met at the few balls she had been at were dancers, but not men in her eyes; she accepted them, left them, accepted them again without the slightest quickening of her pulse. But M. de Bois-Robert had in an instant revealed a new life. Enveloped, so to speak, by his breath, carried away by him in this whirlwind of charming circles, where the rapid movements confusing her head, she was seized with a species of vertigo from which the poor young creature could not well defend herself, she was so entirely engulfed by this new danger.

Maxence waltzed well; his strong arm not only supported, but skilfully guided his partner, keeping her, untouched, in the midst of other couples, carried away as themselves by the speed of the time. He carried her four or five times round the saloon; but when he saw a cloud over her face, the growing trouble in her misty eyes; when he felt the hand on his shoulder moving nervously, whilst the other trembled between his fingers, he gently stopped. They found they were near a deep recess of a window which was unoccupied, and in which a tapestry sofa offered a convenient seat, protected from curious eyes by an enormous japanese vase which was surmounted by a bunch of flowers and luxuriant leaves.

"I think," said Maxence, in a low tone, still holding the slight graceful figure of Mlle. Derville, "I think we had better rest a little while." She silently bowed her consent. He led her to the bench, raising with his hand the drooping branches, and made her sit down.

Jeanne placed herself against the window, her head thrown slightly back, and held her handkerchief to her lips, from which came short hurried breathings.

"Rest yourself," said Maxence, in a sweet caressing tone.

"We ought to waltz all the time."

M. de Bois-Robert looked at Mlle. Derville some time without speaking.

He found her charming; and it was indeed impossible to dream of anything more exquisitely beautiful than Jeanne

at this moment. The excitement of the waltz had heightened the carnation of her fresh young face, whilst her internal emotion threw a liquid light into her eyes. One could see that a mixture of sweetness, pride, tenderness, and passion prevailed over her, and made her a remarkably desirable conquest. It is a strange, painful trial, to feel one's self near happiness, and that when no visible objection exists, still we cannot grasp it. This trial Bois-Robert experienced. The unfortunate youth was obliged to contend against himself and his own inclinations which so strongly drew him towards Jeanne. With what deep, sincere joy would he have yielded himself to them on the morning of that very day!

Maxence remained standing silently before Jeanne for several moments; then with a sudden resolution, which seemed to cost him a great effort, "Behold! mademoiselle," said he, "a strange day, whose ending is so different from its commencement, that I do not yet know if I ought to count it among the good or evil days which divide my life. Alas! like all other men."

Mlle. Derville's face expressed undisguised surprise at this commencement. She withdrew the handkerchief from her lips rather quickly, and looked inquiringly at the young man.

"Truly," continued M. de Bois-Robert, "I have been to-day happy and unhappy."

"Why happy?" asked she, gently.

"Because I have seen you," said he, so frankly, his sincerity could not be doubted; and in such a respectful manner, that the most susceptible person could not feel alarmed or on their guard.

"And why unhappy?" continued the orphan in a still lower tone, whilst her heart beat quickly under her gauze robe.

Maxence's reply to the first question, started instantly from his lips, like the eruption escaping from an over-charged crater. Now, on the contrary, he thought, he hesitated, he searched for words that would not come.

Jeanne's anxiety increased from this slowness and visible embarrassment. Her true, open, but decided look, interrogated the young man's countenance, whose color went and came.

In the meantime M. de Blanchelande, who with his eyes had followed Jeanne and M. de Bois-Robert through the waltz, and had accompanied them to the threshold of their improvised retreat, now thought they had been long enough alone, and sought a pretext for following them. "You are too warm, my child," said he, in a paternal tone, "to be so near this window. You will take cold—they do not shut tight—have you not felt the draught?"

Whilst speaking, he entered the recess as if to prove the truth of his assertions. Maxence was obliged to move a little to let him pass, and he was thus placed between and separated them.

The two young people could not dissimulate, and their embarrassment could not be long unobserved by such a man as the baron. This intimacy between them astonished and hurt him. He could not explain it, and it secretly irritated him.

A prey to a fit of jealousy, which disturbs in man the exercise of his intelligence, and leaves his actions no longer free, he remained by Mlle. Derville to hinder her, at least, from being with Maxence in this half solitude.

Jeanne was much annoyed by this action, not only because it prevented the earnestly-hoped-for explanation, but because the attentions of Victorine's father, which had always been tiresome and disagreeable, now that they interfered between her and another, threatened to become perfectly odious. Her expressive countenance, which she did not in the least control, showed clearly what she felt, while M. de Blanchelande was still more displeased.

There was between our three personages what in politics they call a dead lock. Victorine, who had not promised to play the part of "orchestra" all alone for the whole evening, struck the last notes of the waltz, and left the piano.

The couples separated, and formed gay, lively groups, spreading over the whole saloon. Jeanne, Maxence, and the baron could not, unnoticed, remain for ever in the recess of a window.

Mlle. Derville soon saw herself surrounded, as if they had been commanded to overwhelm her with attention. This eagerness rather astonished her, for she had taken an insignificant part lately in the noisy pleasures of the soirées of the chateau. She had only appeared in the

drawing-room in conformity to the conventionalities and laws of hospitality, withdrawing as soon as it was possible.

Now there was a brightness about her, showing a return of interest in life. All the youth, life, gaiety, and eager pleasures of the chateau, made her happy, and the joyous welcome of her return shone from all eyes. The men threw off their reserve. They contended for the honor of a dance with her. She repaid them with a good grace for the sweet flattery they bestowed on her. To see her at this moment one would say she was the happiest creature in the world.

They would have been mistaken. Happiness is naturally more peaceable and calm. The fact was, Jeanne felt as if she needed noise, distraction, motion, and she seized all with avidity.

This was certainly the most animated evening they had passed at the chateau. But, as it often happens when human passions are brought into play, many faces were masked. More than one had deceitful looks. More than one mouth expressed sentiments not seconded by the heart, or, as an old author so tersely expresses it, "The use of language is to conceal thought."

M. de Blanchelande, notwithstanding the appearance of light gaiety with which he floated from one woman to another, felt the sting of an unappeased jealousy, under the influence of constraint that he imposed on himself, in the presence of the youth and elegance of those whom he supposed to be dangerous rivals. His desires increased by degrees, until what he supposed a passing fancy now became a furious passion.

Victorine, whose mother had implanted in her breast ideas well received by young girls, and especially agreeable on account of Maxence's appearance, experienced displeasure in dreaming that her companion and friend could be a stumbling block in her path. An *obstacle!* Indeed, she would not endure that! She, the spoiled child, who had always had her own way, and whose slightest wish every one in the house seemed only too happy to promote!

Mme. de Blanchelande thought too highly of her daughter's merits and perfections to imagine any one's even entering the lists against her. She did not therefore honor Jeanne by fearing her in the slighest degree, but it was annoying to think that her hopes, her plans, her wishes could be disarranged in the least by an orphan, a stranger, portionless, whom she had imprudently brought to her home. And then Maxence's attentions to Jeanne seemed an injury to Victorine. But, thank God! she will not always be at the chateau, that is, if on. can make her leave. But we will make her leave. Her husband's manner had been singular towards this young lady for several days. However, this was not the time for recriminations. The mother in the baroness overruled the wife. She would demand an account for them later.

Maxence on his part was the victim of a troubled mind. He regretted ever coming to the chateau de Blanchelande. He wished to leave, but felt himself detained by a strong fascination. Ah! why had he met two young ladies, instead of one? Why was not Jeanne, Victorine? Jeanne for her part, though too proud to complain, deserved pity. These first emotions of love, which usually bring the young soul such pure, sweet, deep joys, had brought her only a sorrowful care, she did know what to think. Maxence's half confidences so rudely interrupted, left her in a cruel uncertainty. There was a mystery in it all she could not understand, but which threw her into a state amounting almost to anguish. Notwithstanding the reserve, discretion, and respect of Maxence, she saw distinctly (women never mistake in these things) that he was drawn to her by a sympathy as powerful as rapid.

Why did it make him suffer? Why did he fight against it, instead of yielding to it with that confidence which she deserved, with that frankness which is the most beautiful appendage of youth?

Such were the questions Jeanne asked herself, without being able to answer during the sleeplessness of a feverish night.

CHAPTER XXII.

MADAME DE BLANCHELANDE made her husband understand by a secret signal that she desired a private interview. The baron, whose conscience was not without fear, since his conduct was not without reproach, concealed his

annoyance, and when every one had retired, went rather sheepishly towards his wife's apartment, the threshold of which he had respected too much to cross for many a long day.

Mme. de Blanchelande entered at once into her subject, without preamble or oratorical precaution.

"I must acknowledge," said she, offering her husband a seat in front of her, "that the day we asked that young lady to our house, we did a very foolish thing."

"I have felt several times inclined to reproach you on the subject," replied the baron, with a subtle hypocrisy which did not deceive his wife; but she allowed it to pass for the moment.

"I have made a mistake, or we both have, as you please! It is of little importance where the fault lies! We must now think only of the remedy."

M. de Blanchelande knew his wife well enough to understand from the preface what the conclusion would be. He merely bowed his head slowly with a mute acquiescence not very compromising.

"Edward," continued the baroness in a solemn manner, "do you love your daughter?"

"Do I love my daughter? You ask me that? You? Do you not know it? Have I ever given you the right to ask such a question?"

"You are right and I am wrong! I do you that justice! I know that if you are as a husband slightly indifferent, you are certainly a good father."

"It is fortunate that you are convinced of that."

"Yes, I am certain of it! And since you love Victorine, you must see that Jeanne cannot stay here any longer."

The blow was direct but not unexpected, and the baron instantly tried to ward it off.

"I do not precisely understand," said he with great calmness, "how a noble young girl—modest, well educated, and perfectly lady-like—could be out of place anywhere; especially in our house."

"Is it possible you defend her?"

"Is it possible you attack her?"

"I have some reason to do so, for I am not so blind as it pleases certain persons to suppose. But I have renounced, as you know, for a long time all personal pretensions. I have long since considered it my duty to sacrifice myself for the internal peace and dignity of the family."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing! I am rambling from the subject! Once more, it is of your daughter's affairs I would speak, and on that subject I make no terms!"

"I do not understand."

"Then you do not, because you are determined to remain blind. This is all put on—but if you please, I will continue. You are aware that Maxence's mother and ourselves have arranged some plans and plighted our words."

"Certainly, still—"

"And do you not feel that while Mlle. Derville remains here, Bois-Robert will look at no one else?"

The baron knew how perfectly true his wife's remarks were; but this it was impossible for him to acknowledge. If he agreed with her, Jeanne would have to leave Blanchelande; and to this, at once, he would not consent for all the world. He saw a thousand dangers in bringing these two young people together, but he shrank from Mlle. Derville's departure more than all the rest. In the fierce, foolish egotism of his passions, he much preferred Maxence's departure, no matter what became of their designs on the young count; but he could not express this to any one, least of all to his wife.

"I think there is a little exaggeration in your fears," replied he, with an affectation of indifference.

"I tell you she has made a deep impression on him."

And as the baron tried to make a faint denial:

"Perhaps you do not believe her capable of such fascinations?" continued the baroness, flashing on the baron her quick piercing look, and frowning so that, notwithstanding she was a blonde, her air was very tragic.

M. de Blanchelande saw that his wife was becoming more and more aggressive, and that he must bring more prudence and reserve into play.

"I believe," said he, "that a woman is capable of accomplishing all she desires."

"Our duty is then perfectly clear,

and I hope you will aid me in its fulfilment?"

"You should be aware of that without doubt; only the question is on this word duty—a very elastic word. Let us consider coolly, first, whether Maxence loves, or does not love, Mlle. Derville."

"Certainly. After that?"

"If he does love her, nothing we can do will destroy this love in his heart; and if he does not love her, why should we gratuitously offend a poor young girl, who would have the right to rely on us for protection?"

"I am of another opinion. In sending her away, if they are not yet in love, we will prevent the evil; and if they are in love, we will repair it."

"You are entirely mistaken; absence never kills true love. If by taking advantage of a momentary weakness and despair, we throw Maxence into the arms of our daughter, his heart still filled with the image of another, we will only succeed in making three people unhappy. Is this what you wish to accomplish?"

"Certainly not, as you know perfectly well; but you are far from comprehending the state of affairs. Your siren has not yet charmed Bois-Robert to such an extent that he cannot live without her. Victorine, besides, is capable of making him entirely forgetful of her. Only let her go away! that is all I ask of you."

"She shall go!"

"Right—but when?"

"Permit me, now that we have agreed on the main question, to arrange all the rest. I have duties, as the father of a family, and you see I do not cast them aside, but I have others also, and nothing will prevent me from fulfilling them."

"What are they, then?"

"Those of the master of the house; the head responsible for the hospitality of the chateau."

The baroness shrugged her shoulders; but M. de Blanchelande took no notice of this, for he continued with much firmness:

"I did not know this young girl, and all this trouble has arisen by your own action. In welcoming Mlle. Derville under my roof, to which you brought her, I have assumed moral obligations towards her, from which I will not depart. Since she has come here, she must remain!"

"Ah! this is your conclusion? Then I will leave, and take Victorine!"

"Your good sense would not allow you to commit this freak, or to act so as to give rise to scandal. You have invited Jeanne to pass the vacation at Blanchelande. The vacation ends in three weeks, or a month at farthest! *It must be! I tell you, it must be! You hear me!* that Mlle. Derville passes all this time with Victorine—her friend! She shall quit us at the end of that period, and not before. It is very good to think of our own, but it is necessary to think of others a little also; to consider, though not against them, their position and their fortune. Without giving her any notice; without her expecting it; without her having done anything to deserve it; to throw a poor girl into the public streets—for, I ask you, where else you intend her to go?—would be a truly mean action; unworthy of you, of her, and of myself; I will never consent to it."

"Is this your final determination?"

"It is my final determination; it is the only one I can make, situated as I am. You will be convinced of this yourself, if you do me the honor to reflect a little on the subject. Good-night, my dear."

The baron arose to leave, so as not to prolong uselessly an irritating discussion. If he left his wife seriously displeased, he was not much more calm himself. Against the act of sending Jeanne away, which he had been so resolutely required to do, he had risen up violently, contended with singular energy, and finally laid down his positive commands. Jeanne remained at Blanchelande. But his wife took pleasure in turning and re-turning a burning iron in his wound.

Jeanne was loved by another, and this one was handsome, young, rich, titled; he had all that could win a young girl's love.

Perhaps she already loved him! soon she surely must!

Ah! the one whose heart has not been torn by the tortures of jealousy does not know the most terrible of all human sufferings!

The baron cursed the moment he had

first met Bois-Robert. It was he whom he wished to send away from Blanchelande. Why had he come there?

Sometimes, after his tortures had been the most intense, he felt a kind of quiet happiness, which did not last long. He would assure himself that his wife had exaggerated things very much. A sympathetic feeling was not a passion. They could like each other without being in love. Maxence was a judicious young man, and would not renounce, for a simple love affair, all the advantages that an alliance with Victorine would bring him. But yet, soon judging others by himself, he would say it was impossible to see Jeanne without yielding to her beauty; and once loving her, to renounce her would be out of the question. He must then contend with Bois-Robert for her; but without any hope, except to expose himself, as he distinctly understood, to be despised as ridiculous, and branded as detestable. Then he knew not what to do, and his whole night was passed in undecided, perplexing thoughts.

The next morning, Jeanne, who had retained her school habit of early rising, went into the garden to breathe the fresh balmy air. After a few turns on the terrace, which was overlooked by the back windows of the house, she walked, without thinking, towards the lake and English river. Following, thoughtfully, its devious course, soon she reached a little rustic bridge, whose balustrade was embroidered with ivy and festooned with honeysuckle, and seeming to coax her to enter. She ventured on it. When she reached the middle, she bent over the deep murmuring water which ran beneath. What her thoughts were at this moment none could tell; but she would not yield to them, for she said, in a low tone, while a shudder passed over her, "It is not good for me to be here; I must not look longer at this water—it tempts me!" And she rapidly crossed the rest of the bridge. A magnificent walk lay before her, shaded on either side by a range of acacia trees, whose young heads joined, forming a very bower of verdure

Jeanne loved this walk, where the blackbirds warbled and the redbreasts sang. It was her favorite ever since she had been at Blanchelande. It led, by a skilfully winding transition, from the garden to the park. The young girl was surprised at reaching the end—she had moved mechanically. Soon she saw, at some distance, the rustic bench where she had been seated so quietly on the morning when the Count de Bois-Robert appeared so suddenly before her. She stopped and reflected. How this one day had changed her entire life! What deep traces it would leave on her existence! What sensations of happiness it had given her, by revealing her to herself!

But with so many joys, what sorrowful preoccupations, what secret uneasiness had this sudden, violent unfolding of a new sentiment, alas! brought! If this was truly love, how right had the dear mistresses of her life been when they told their young scholars "That love was often a misfortune, and always a danger!"

Whilst reflecting thus, she involuntarily looked at the place where Maxence, as he passed, had broken the branches of the white thorn and privet.

It was at the foot of this juniper tree he had stopped and taken off his hat with that chivalric grace that had charmed her. She recalled all his words. She heard again the polite phrases of excuse for surprising her, and involuntarily breaking in on her retreat.

She was provoked at herself for these persistent remembrances, and bitterly reproached herself with seeking to revive them by revisiting this spot.

"Ah!" said she, "I am truly ashamed of myself; I do not deserve any pity."

After this hard but sincere apostrophe, Jeanne rose to fly from the seductions that in the depths of her heart she had sought. She had only taken a few steps when, at a turn in the long massive walls which had shut in her view, she found herself face to face with M. de Bois-Robert.

Accident alone had led to this truly unexpected meeting. They were both dumb with surprise. Jeanne paused in amazement, incapable of advancing or retiring, and could not find one word to say; trembled, but was none the less fascinating. Maxence saw the young girl's trouble, and it touched his heart. He was not free from embarrassment, but he felt that silence would render their position still more perplexing to both.

"Mademoiselle," said he, standing a few steps away from Jeanne, "pardon, I pray you, the happy chance that has permitted us to meet again. I have so many things to say to you, if you will be good enough to listen."

When Jeanne first saw the young count she became as red as her sash—now she was as white as her dress. She could not reply.

"If I dared," said the young man, "I would urge you to sit down."

"But, sir, you see I am going home."

"Only for a few moments. This opportunity will not return. I may never find it again. Oh! I implore you to listen!"

His voice was more persuasive than his words. Jeanne yielded. Her heart fought for him against herself. It basely betrayed her. She allowed him to lead her to the bench, where she sat down. Maxence stood a few steps from her. He looked at her silently for a few moments, as if wishing to engrave her features indelibly on his memory.

She raised her eyes, and looked at him with her beautiful, clear, frank, sweet look, seeming to say, I have stayed at your desire. I am listening, and you are silent! What have you to say?

"Mademoiselle," said Maxence, at last, in a low tone, and hesitating, "if we were situated in the ordinary way in regard to each other; if you had any family; I would not allow myself to speak as I feel, as if it was not the thing—but you are an orphan, alone in the world—mistress of your own destiny! What you wish, that you can do. This is a great happiness—bought by a great misfortune."

Here M. de Bois-Robert paused, as if the last sentence had exhausted all his strength, and he was obliged to take breath before proceeding.

"But it seems to me, sir," said Jeanne, softly, "that you have endured the same misfortune, and that you have the same happiness."

"Neither so happy nor so unfortunate. I have still my mother."

By the way Maxence pronounced these words, "I have still my mother," Jeanne saw that the ruling sentiment of his soul in regard to this mother was fear more than affection, and if fear is the beginning of wisdom, it is not generally the commencement of love. Jeanne, of course, kept her reflections to herself.

"I must tell you all," continued Maxence, drawing near her, "or my conduct yesterday will be inexplicable to you."

"I confess," said Jeanne, in a low tone, "it was rather incomprehensible."

"Of course, of course! Yesterday, when I saw you on this seat, my whole being rushed towards you. I felt the strongest, sweetest sensation of my life."

Just as I felt, thought the young girl, who listened with half-closed eyes, intent ears, head inclined, and beating heart, but silently fearing to interrupt him.

"You saw how joyfully I wandered near you through this beautiful park! How happy I was walking by your side. Ah! if I had dared to take your hand!"

Jeanne looked for some moments at the young man's face, which was glowing with the complete happiness enjoyed only by those whose souls are raised to that degree of sublimity where adoration becomes ecstasy.

"We reached the chateau, and I will never forget the charming collation of which you did me the honor. How good the bread was that your fingers touched! I was under a charm, and would willingly have remained under the yoke your hands had thrown around me! You had, however, the cruel courage to send me away when my chief desire was to remain by your side; but I was forced to obey. I started—I tore across the country—I raced like a madman—I had a mind to stop every one I met, and exclaim to them, 'Do you wish to see *one* happy man? If you do, look at me!'"

Moved, with beating heart, completely fascinated, Jeanne listened to these confused, ardent words in which the delirious love of this susceptible youth poured itself out.

She crossed her hands on her knees, and bent her head slightly forward in an attitude of yielding grace and abandonment; she betrayed her emotion only by her vivid color, her quick breath, the slight trembling of her beautiful arms, seen through her half-open sleeves; but at this point in this very affecting recital, Jeanne, by an instinctive move-

ment of curiosity, turned to the young man as if to ask him, "What then—continue if you please, and inform me what changed all that."

"Oh! you can never know," continued Maxence, whose voice suddenly trembled, "what passed in my heart on reaching Pheasant's Island, where all the guests of the baron were assembled, when this old friend of my father's took me by the hand and presented me to his daughter!"

"I do not see," said Jeanne, in a low tone, "why an introduction to such a sweet, lovely person as Mlle. de Blanchelande could be so painful;" but she turned her head away. Her countenance, denying her words, proved that she understood perfectly.

"Well," continued Bois-Robert, "I have now said so much, I must tell you all! When I saw you, mademoiselle, I supposed you were Mlle. de Blanchelande."

"And this is why I pleased you! You took me for her!" replied Mlle. Derville, with a quick bitterness that came from her heart to her lips.

"Oh, mademoiselle, how badly you must think of me, if you judge me thus!" said Maxence, regarding the young girl with a deep, almost tearful look. "If you only knew how bitterly wretched I am!"

Jeanne remained silent.

Maxence went on:—"My mother—pardon her, mademoiselle, for she does not know you—my mother, on sending me here, informed me that the two families had arranged, a long time ago, to unite Victorine and myself. I was perfectly free yesterday, and my greatest desire was to please my mother. Every one around me eulogized Mlle. de Blanchelande. There were a thousand suitable reasons for the match, such as notaries and grandparents search for. My greatest desire was to find here a person who would render it easy for me to conform to the wishes of my family. I saw you—I thought you were the one. Whilst my mistake endured I experienced such joy as would make heaven jealous. They gave me for a wife the very woman I would have selected above all others."

A declaration was never made with more truth and feeling, nor with a more communicative warmth; and no woman had ever listened with more feeling, and received with more sadness.

Jeanne could not doubt M. de Bois-Robert's loyalty. This loyalty shone from his noble countenance, which God had not formed to deceive. Truth looked from his eyes.

But, understanding a stern fate separated them, she wondered if he had the strength to conquer it, and the reply she made herself was not consoling.

"You may be slightly unhappy, but these feelings have so lately bloomed in your soul, their root cannot be very deep," replied Jeanne, in a few moments. "I am told men easily forget, and very quickly, especially at your age. You will forget me!"

Maxence shook his head emphatically, and tried to take Jeanne's hand, which she would not permit.

"The plans you allude to are as satisfactory at Blanchelande as at Bois-Robert. Too many people are interested not to perceive at once the obstacle, if it really exists, that would hinder their plans. They would wish to remove it. A very easy thing for them to do," said she, with the proud dignity that circumstances fully justified. "Alas! I commence to feel how bitter it is to eat the bread of others. But believe me truly, it is not necessary to give me more than one hint! The first sufficed! and even that is useless. Mme. de Blanchelande is no longer the same toward me; Victorine is changed, or is commencing to change."

"And the baron?" asked Maxence, looking earnestly at the young girl.

"The baron," said Jeanne, slightly shrugging her shoulders, and without turning her eyes, "I thought at first was very good to me; but now I believe he is only good to himself. At any rate, I did not come here on M. de Blanchelande's account, and it is not for him I would remain. I wish to go away."

"To go away!" cried the count, with great eagerness. "Go away! Where, mademoiselle?"

"I do not know, sir," she replied, with exaltation, her eyes bright with unshed tears. "I go where destiny may lead me, through the vast world."

"Alone? At your age? Oh, mademoiselle, you cannot mean that!"

"There are circumstances which

cause old age to come quickly. Yesterday I was eighteen—to-morrow I shall be thirty! God always does right!"

"Still there is no hurry! I pray you to remain a few days longer at Blanchelande."

"And why so, if you please?"

"That we may be near each other," said the count, emboldened by degrees to take Jeanne's hand almost against her will.

"And then," said the young girl, with a sad, graceful movement of the head, "we must separate! I must go, sir! Believe me, I am certain of what I say—the sooner the better! Ah! the better it had been if we had never met!"

"Do not speak so! Do not let me think you have no confidence in me! I do not deserve that you should be so cruel! Do not let us be at our age like the cold diplomatists who always doubt their first impulses because they are good! Let us yield to the attraction we have for each other. I certainly for you; you perhaps for me! Oh! I have never felt for any one such an irresistible attraction! It costs too much for me to allow you to leave without doing all I can to prevent it."

"That is to say, give severe shape to your existence—hitherto laughing, happy, easy, free from embarrassment and cares. Hold, sir! I do not know life as the world has made it. I know still less of the world. I have only seen it through the iron gate of my boarding-school; but I seem to understand a little of it. You are moved now by generous thoughtless sympathy—perhaps involuntarily!"

"Ah! mademoiselle! involuntarily! how can you speak so?"

"Pardon me, sir! but I speak as I ought to speak. You are acting under the influence of momentary passion!"

"Say rather of an adoration, which will endure for life!"

"When this passion," said Jeanne, raising her head, "has followed the course of ordinary human feelings, when it shall have given place to cold, calm reason, you will then see the error you have committed; and what will be very terrible for me, you will accuse me with it."

"Oh, mademoiselle! Oh! Jeanne, my dear Jeanne! how have you reached this cold analysis; this cruel experience?"

"Alas! do you not know it has cost me dearly?" replied Mlle. Derville, drying her eyes with the back of her hand, to prevent the tears from running down her cheek.

Maxence, much affected, tried to draw this pale charming head to him, with a sweet, almost fraternal manner. It was so innocent and affectionate; but this, Jeanne's dignity would not allow; and she quickly withdrew, seating herself with much agitation on the other end of the bench.

"If God had been good to me," murmured she, "he would have allowed me to die six weeks before I left St. Denis. Then in dying, I should have returned my soul to Him, still worthy of Him; filled with beautiful dreams and noble illusions; believing devoutly in pure generosity—in holy, unalterable, sacred friendship. Yes, I ought to have died then!" Jeanne said this with a sorrowful enthusiasm, of which she was entirely unconscious. Her tears, no longer restrained, traced a wet burning ridge on her cheeks.

"Dear, dear child!" said Maxence, with a mixture of sweetness and authority. "Granting that all that is true, there are many things also true, which you do not mention. There is love greater than friendship. Love, the only feeling that may be perfectly disinterested! Love which obeys neither considerations nor calculations! Love which is its own reward! Love that we find in the ruins of the world, for it is stronger than death! Oh, doubt everything you wish, Jeanne, but do not doubt love!"

The young man spoke in a tone of such perfect conviction, with such a deep, noble ardor, that Jeanne, who perhaps wished only to be persuaded, felt herself by degrees gained to a cause so well sustained.

She still tried to raise some objections; but it was easy to see that they were for the honor of her principles, and that it would not be a hard task for a well-inspired orator to carry away these last excuses.

"Come, now, now, do not be naughty," said Maxence, drawing near her, "do not be so discouraged about

the future. For though it is true, that to attain my desire, I must employ all my energy, and bring all my forces into play, not yielding in the least, all I ask of you, is to wait before judging me, until you have seen my actions. Until then have confidence in me, and in yourself. Oh, Jeanne, believe in life! believe in happiness!'

Poor Jeanne asked nothing better than to have faith. It was very sweet to her to believe in Maxence above everything, and to rely entirely on him. Was he not now her only hope—her only refuge—her whole future?

"God hears you," said she, raising her beautiful eyes, still wet with tears, but full of courage; and as if to make him understand better, the unity which now existed between them, and the growth of their common interest, she said: "Do you not think we have been long enough together?"

"Not too long!"

"No, but long enough! I perceive a movement about the house. It is useless to give any new subject of irritation to people, who are already turned against us. Leave me, then, I beg."

"I cannot refuse this first proof of my obedience. Farewell, mademoiselle! No—farewell to meet again, Jeanne!"

Maxence arose, holding out his hand to Mlle. Derville, who this time gave him hers. He shouldered his gun—for shooting had been the excuse for the morning ramble—and started to shoot the thrush, which on the outskirts of the neighboring woods, plundered the red berries of the mountain ash, and the blackberries of the junipers. As to Jeanne, she watched him a long time from the bench where he had been sitting, lost in a flood of overwhelming emotion, given up to entirely new feelings, which carried her out of herself, with an irresistible strength and power.

"Well!" said she, with a mixed troubled joy; "I am loved! I love! It has come so quickly! suddenly! I scarcely perceived it myself! In truth, I do not know how it has happened—but he has such a good, loyal, chivalric air; so young, in a century too where they say there is no more any youth; and so sincere! Oh, no! I cannot doubt his love for me! And I! oh! I love him also, I feel it with all my soul! And now—what will happen? Will he have the necessary courage and perseverance to resist the will—perhaps the tears—of others? Will this love give a power to my life, or will it only increase my difficulties and complications? Oh! why cannot I yield, without these sad reflections, to this unexpected happiness? Why can I not confide in the future? After all! he loves me and I love him! That is all I know! All I desire to know to-day!"

Soon she returned home alone. Only to see her as she passed, and you would understand that a change had come over her. There was more assurance in her walk; she felt no longer alone in life; another took an intense interest in all that concerned her; she could lean on him, if necessary; was it not the man's part to sustain the woman and protect her? Let the baroness display again her impertinent patronizing manner, as last evening—what cared she! Let Victorine henceforward be ill-humored and capricious, she would quickly find consolation in the idea that she was the loved one, the preferred and chosen.

As for the baron, she scarcely remembered his existence.

Was she not now far beyond everything in this world; above everything in this world except himself?

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHATEAU life was perfectly understood at Blanchelande. Until breakfast time all were perfectly free. The first repast was the first moment of the company's meeting—it was then that community of life commenced—it was then, also, that the chief actors were in each other's presence, as well as the supernumeraries of this little drama that we are relating.

All those who, for one reason or another, had been engaged the night before watching M. de Bois-Robert and Mlle. Derville, had resolved to observe them still more attentively to-day. Jeanne endured their scrutiny with a singularly easy and independent spirit.

The baron was astonished at such unlooked-for self-possession, but did not suspect the cause. Mme. de Blanche-

lande, with more sagacity, as she was a woman, guessed all that passed in this young soul. She said to herself, "that to be so assured and so calm. Jeanne must have seen Maxence; that there was an understanding between them; that the young man, fascinated by the charms and beauty of Mlle. Derville and incapable of resisting the strength of a first love, had revealed his soul and pledged his faith; that Jeanne saw opening before her the enchanting and unlooked-for prospect of a marriage for love, with a young man, rich, titled and handsome. Was not this a hundred times better than she had dared to hope for? She would marry the man that all the mothers wished to catch for their daughters, and all the daughters for themselves. And this marriage, such a frightful thing to think about! She had snatched him from Victorine! Did not M. de Bois-Robert belong in reality to Victorine? The two families, had they not planned this union long time ago? The trouble that the presence of the orphan brought into all these projects assumed, in her eyes, the character of an injury to some sacred rights!

Mlle. de Blanchelande, whose mother had spoken to her the same morning, went to her friend's room to have an explanation with her, which would not be free from difficulty, but which proved the frankness of her character and the brightness of a loyal correct nature.

She wished to confess everything; but no one was there to receive her confidence; she found the nest empty; the bird flown; and she soon learnt from a waiting-maid, who was rather the spy of the chateau, that Mlle. Derville had gone to walk in the large park by the spruce trees, and that M. de Bois-Robert had followed a few moments afterwards.

This revelation was a shock to Mlle. de Blanchelande; she felt a quick sorrow, a great irritation. This irritation showed itself in a pettish air towards Jeanne. Under other circumstances this would have caused our heroine great sorrow. Now she was completely indifferent—she had an armor of diamonds around her heart which rendered her invulnerable. The brightness of the moon of friendship paled singularly before the rising sun of love!

The young count was closely scrutinized. He had hardly entered the room when he found himself the centre of observation—spied and watched by all around. But if they spied him, he defied them! Neither the lynx nor the Argus could discover anything!

Whilst in a studied false position, all that happiness which should arise from the ties and intimacy of two beings who love, whose hearts long to open to each other, gives place to a feeling of uneasy and troubled embarrassment. Maxence was the one who suffered the most by this inevitable change. Hitherto his mind had been perfectly free from care. Having had nothing to conceal, he was very unfamiliar with the ruses of the diplomatic world. He was constrained by this new role, which forced him to act a part. His burning feelings of a first love must be hidden. He feared so much that he overshot the mark, and treated Jeanne with a reserve which all said was unnatural.

They noticed the young people did not speak to each other. There must be an understanding between them. As to Jeanne, strong in the right and loyalty of her feelings, full of the confidence natural to young souls who have not yet experienced the duplicity of human nature, she understood her friend, and was far from being offended at this indifference, and bore his apparent coldness with an imperturbable serenity.

All felt, however, that a crisis was at hand—only all desired to arrange it to suit themselves. Mme. de Blanchelande wished to find some means of sending Jeanne away, without causing her husband to take violently and openly the young girl's part.

The baron wished that Maxence would openly demand of him Victorine's hand, or else leave the chateau, where his presence caused only trouble and regret. But he could not find the way to lead the count quietly, without scandal, to do as he desired. On no account in the world would he take on his own head the responsibility of a dangerous, compromising initiative.

He felt he could not risk a rupture without lowering himself in the eyes of his guests, and becoming the laughing-stock and talk of the whole province.

Jeanne felt the unpleasantness of her precarious existence more strongly than

ever. If she had the least personal independence, if she could have been certain of finding a shelter anywhere in which she could have awaited the future Maxence wished to arrange for them, she would have withdrawn at once from this *detestable* house. But where could she go now? The only little corner of the earth she owned—the last scrap of the maternal inheritance—was not at her disposal. The Rosery was rented, and the whole world was for her a solitary desert. Maxence, however, judged things well enough to see that this difficult question could not be solved at Blanchelande, but at Bois-Robert. It was there only that he could settle it; so he decided to return at once.

A little country boy, easily bribed, carried Jeanne a letter at five in the morning, which Maxence had written the night before. He informed the baron, by a note, in a few words, that he was summoned home by his mother's unexpected illness.

"My faith!" said Victorine's father, making a ball of the little note his servant had brought him; "if this is not true, it is very well invented! He has gone! that is all I can desire at this moment. A good journey to him! may he return when I send for him! I will easily find a son-in-law more to my taste."

Mme. de Blanchelande was not so easily satisfied as her husband; she suspected a ruse of the enemy, in this sudden and unexpected flight, without exactly seeing the young man's real intentions; but she thought it best to forewarn Maxence's mother, whose principles and designs she well understood; she knew her to be a strong-minded woman, incapable of yielding to a romantic inspiration; she placed, therefore, in her hands, the easy task of seeing that the sacred plight of the two families be fulfilled. Jeanne alone knew the truth. How could he now keep a secret from her? The long letter he sent her, confirmed what he said in bidding her farewell the evening before.

He renewed all his assertions in the strongest terms; assured her of his unalterable attachment; explained that the complications which surrounded him were increased by his remaining at Blanchelande. He was going to see his mother; it was only near her, in the confidence and chat of common, intimate life, that he could induce her to change her former projects. He knew she was very tenacious, and that it would need all his eloquence to gain her consent. Jeanne must feel assured he would leave no stone unturned to attain this end; her guarantee of this, was the love of one who henceforward would know no happiness without her.

From the first line to the last, the letter was exactly what it should be, the true language of a violently-enamored heart.

Jeanne devoured it with a passionate eagerness, and reread it twenty times in order to enjoy the charm the better. Nevertheless, by dint of this incessant analysis, the young girl saw at last that the warmth of these protestations did not disguise his irresolution. There was in this letter no definitely-arranged project for the future, no plan of conduct. In a word, nothing which could direct her course in life. If Maxence did not decide promptly, if he did not gain, in some way, his mother's consent, Jeanne saw she was condemned to more cruel uncertainties than any she had yet experienced. She fell into the anguish of doubt, to which were added the tortures of absence, an entirely new feeling to her. Now that he was no longer there, all her past joys turned to sorrows. She counted the days; Maxence did not return; no one spoke of him or his mother; this silence augured badly; Jeanne hoped a little and feared a great deal.

She would have hoped less and feared more if she had known the whole truth.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE return of Maxence to Bois-Robert, had caused a violent scene between the mother and the son. The young count held his head very high, as falsely brave ones generally do, and feigned, when he touched the main question, an assurance and self-confidence he was far from having. After speaking of Mlle. Jeanne Derville to his mother with a very sincere real enthusiasm (which however was received coldly enough by this wise individual), he declared his intention of marrying, as an irrevocably settled affair, announ-

ced to his mother with a respectful deference; as if it were not at all necessary to consult, or still less to request her permission.

This cavalier manner in her son, who had until now been so submissive, was entirely unexpected, and caused her a sudden disagreable surprise. Eh! what! thought she, looking at Maxence again and again, my son must have been changed during the journey. I should like to know to whom I am indebted for this prodigy.

Then in a tone whose extreme sweetness frightened the young man, for he knew that his mother hid the most indomitable will under the most apparently soft and languishing manner:

"I do not understand exactly, my dear child, what you are saying to me. You have confused and disarranged my ideas. I know you ought to get married: this is the reason I sent you to Blanchelande to meet your intended, little Victorine! Why then dost thou speak to me of a young lady named Jeanne? Has thy head, unfortunately never very strong, become deranged?"

"No, mother. I believe, on the contrary, that I have never been more decided in my wishes."

"Then! what do you tell me?"

"This marriage with Victorine you must see is an old story."

"Ah! Why, if you please?"

"Because I do not love Victorine, and because I love another."

"Yes, I know—Mlle. Jeanne."

"Mlle. Jeanne Derville."

"Very well, Mlle. Derville, if you like! But you forget that Mlle. de Blanchelande has been your intended for many years."

"For so long a time that it is the 'past future!'" replied Maxence, without seeing how unfortunately ill-timed was this bad jest.

"She is the only person I will receive as my daughter-in-law. I respect my engagement. Your father and I have plighted our word with M. de Blanchelande and there is no withdrawal."

"On the contrary it must be retracted and at once. You know well, mother, that we marry to please ourselves, not others."

"Undoubtedly; yet believe me, it is also for your sake that I desire to marry you. It is my right to choose you a wife; and this wife shall be Mlle. de Blanchelande."

Mme. de Bois-Robert pronounced these last words with a firmness that made her son shudder.

"But, my mother, since I love Mlle. Derville—" said he, with an accent of despair.

"Keep quiet on that subject. You think you love her, but you do not love her! Her pretty piquant face may have inspired thee with a fancy, a taste, a something, which will vanish as quickly as it came; but love, no, no! Love spreads deeper roots in our souls; she whom thou wilt love with the right love—the love which comes with marriage, which will insure the happiness of a lifetime—she whom thy father and I have destined for thee—is Mlle. de Blanchelande."

Maxence silently shook his head.

"He is more obstinate than I supposed. Well, it will be difficult; but I will succeed, because I wish to succeed. To will is to do."

Then turning to her son: "My darling, I see with sorrow that thou art carried away in a bad cause, and if I leave thee to thyself thou wilt be lost."

"Oh, mother! to be happy with the woman whom one loves; whom one has made his wife and the mother of his children; you call that being lost!"

The countess did not reply to this sorrowful explanation. She pretended not to hear it.

"Happily," continued she, "you cannot carry out your foolish intentions; our laws hinder you from working all this evil on yourself. Thou art a minor in regard to thy marriage till twenty-three years old; you must wait two years yet, before you will have the right to ask, through a notary, for my counsel (which you do not intend to follow). It will be but a respectful pretence, by which you will give the most fatal blow to the real respect thou owest me. But till then, thank God! you will have time to reflect."

"Oh, I have reflected enough!" said the young man, raising his head, "only I shall suffer two years, because you will it. Should I have expected that of you, mother? My resolution will not change in two years; I will ask you then, what I ask you now."

"I argue better of thy good sense and wisdom. Still if it pleases thee to commit this folly, then I cannot hinder thee. It will not be my fault. I shall regret it, but without remorse; only as I do not intend to reward thy passions, I forewarn thee that if thou shouldst marry against my will, my fortune will not be yours; you will be forced to rely on your own resources, which are slight enough. I forewarn thee, if thou dost not know it. Thy father has left thee nothing but his name; thou wilt have that."

"I have strength and will gladly work for her," replied Maxence.

"I should like very well to see what you can do," said the countess, shrugging her shoulders contemptuously. "That is, however, what the future will show."

But Maxence was perfectly sincere in the good faith of youth, in the candor and truthfulness of a first love.

The prospects of a contest with life diminished his trouble, and did not in the least frighten him. He felt a pure, exalted joy, mixed with a noble pride, at the idea of working for the woman of his heart, and at the feeling that this woman would owe to his exertions the independence and comforts of her life.

These are pleasures the rich can never know, when to make the happiness of those we love it is only necessary to gain a small portion of the fortune amassed by others.

What now troubled Bois-Robert was the thought of these two long dreary years.

What could Jeanne do? And what could he do for her during this time? Like all those who are born in luxury and wealth, and have not felt the rude trials and imperative necessities of a hard life, Maxence had never yet tested the bitter fruits of experience, and had very little practical knowledge of any sort. His mother was indeed not mistaken in her belief of his incapability to make a living. At this time it was only too true.

This conviction was soon forced on him. The courageous but useless efforts he had made to resist the maternal will was followed by a disheartening, apathetic languor. It seemed as if he had already forgotten that the fate of another rested on his hands—that it was not only of his own future he must now reflect. After his sudden flight, which he now regretted, he felt he could not return to the Chateau de Blanchelande; and Blanchelande held his whole heart. A more enterprising man, one more used to the little ruses so necessary in love and war, would have found a thousand ways to gain over an Abigail or bribe a valet. It was only the question of a few louis, and he could have conceded a plan of correspondence with Mlle. Derville. The honorable purpose of his heart would have justified this; and by an exchange of affectionate letters he would have reanimated the courage and strengthened the resolution of his now sad friend.

This was not a useless care. He thought of it, but dared not! He did more! He did worse! Judging that while he was separated from Jeanne, that distance was of no consequence whether it was three hundred or five hundred miles, the separation was the same. He consented to escort his mother to Italy, who was ordered by a complaisant doctor to spend three or four months in the climate of Naples. Cruel as this departure was for Jeanne, a certain event rendered it still more bitter. They had taken care to inform her in casual conversation that the Blanchelandes were also going to Italy, and that the young people would meet among the Alps.

Jeanne thought she would not have suffered so much if they had stabbed her with a poignard! From this moment she felt the bitter tortures of jealousy, the most cruel tortures a young enamored soul can experience. During the first few days she watched with feverish impatience for a letter, a token, a word, a signal from Maxence. Must he not feel how much she needed reassurance, encouragement, and consolation? Nothing came! He had then forgotten her! She would never see him again! All was ended for her! Thus must close the first chapter of this book of life that she had thought so beautiful, and whose pages would be an entire blank, excepting these first few. She felt no longer able to contend against the coldness of Victorine or the acrimony of the baroness. Her love

killed her pride. Living at Blanchelande soon became intolerable to her. She determined to leave before her hosts should dismiss her—she did not desire they should aid her departure—she had endured all she was able—she informed the baron of her intentions. Of all the family, he had shown himself her best friend.

Maxence's presence in the chateau had singularly and dangerously excited him, but after the young count had left him complete master of the field, he was much calmer and endurable. He had carefully suppressed his over-sentimental wishes, and if he had not entirely extinguished his desire in the depths of his heart, he had at least the prudence to postpone indefinitely the realization of his hopes.

The news of her departure caused him much emotion, which Jeanne could not help noticing; she had become very observing. The lessons of her life had cost her so dear that she could but profit by them. One morning, on finding her alone, he said:

"If these ladies go to Italy, you may rest assured that I will remain in France."

Whilst speaking thus, he looked attentively at her, to see what effect his words would produce.

Jeanne indifferently shrugged her shoulders, and her countenance was as quiet as her lips.

"In a few days," continued the baron, "the chateau, now so lively, will be mournful and deserted. You inform me of your determination to leave it. I regret this, but I dare not urge you to remain longer at present."

"You are right, sir; I have remained here already too long."

"Is this a reproach, mademoiselle?"

"If it is, sir, it is addressed to myself alone, for no one has detained me here, and several would have been delighted to see me depart."

"It is not of me you thus speak?"

"No!" replied Jeanne, with an emphasis which could not allow the baron to doubt the truth of her words for one moment, "No! it is not of you!"

This emboldened him a little. He required some such aid, for he found what he still had to say to Mlle. Derville presented not a few difficulties.

"As for me," continued he in a low tone, "I tell you now, I am not going away; nothing calls me to Italy—and, permit me to tell you—*all* retains me in France."

He looked again at Jeanne, who did not look at him, but she felt, nevertheless, through her lowered eyelids, that two burning eyes were fixed upon her, and she felt a disagreeable sensation of uneasiness and trouble.

The baron feigned not to perceive this impression, and continued:

"I am not susceptible of a fickle sentiment, but when I have once given my affection it will last for ever; I could not free myself, even if I wished. It is part of me; it is my life."

Jeanne did not reply, but she raised her eyes to the baron, as if beseeching him to have pity, and praying him not to speak such words as she ought not to hear.

"This affection, mademoiselle," continued the baron, "I know no one more worthy of inspiring than yourself."

"You are too good, sir," murmured Jeanne.

"Accept, then, in good faith, the little services you need, and that I am so happy to render you; you will thus prove you do not judge me unworthy of your friendship."

"That, sir, you know is utterly impossible!" said Mlle. Derville, with sad dignity. "I have no more right to accept, than you have to offer them."

"I avow these are scruples that I do not comprehend. You have an exaggerated delicacy which is very honorable, and that I appreciate, but which is useless between us, and which can only afflict us both!"

"What do you wish? Life is thus made, we cannot change it. You have no call to serve me, and I can do nothing in return. Victorine knows as much as I do, and you have neither nieces nor cousins whom I can teach; this, as you are aware of, monsieur le baron, is the only thing I am good for."

"Listen, mademoiselle," replied M. de Blanchelande, with great gravity, "you are an intelligent person, and one can tell you everything, because you understand everything. I have not the calls upon you to which you allude, but allow me to say, I have others."

"I am not acquainted with them, sir."

"It is because you do not wish to know them," replied M. de Blanchelande, with more energy than he had yet spoken.

"What are they, then, sir?"

"Those my affection for you gives me, Jeanne."

"Your affection for me, sir," replied the young girl, very decidedly, "your affection is not, cannot be, as you know perfectly well (notwithstanding my sex. I declare to you), of that kind which would permit the services to which I now perfectly understand your allusions."

"A true affection has every right."

"But I have no right to this affection."

"Do not be so cruel and unjust," continued M. de Blanchelande, with emotion; "you cannot yourself be blind to many things. I am not happy, my dear child. For a long time, disagreements that we have carefully hid from the world, have separated Mme. de Blanchelande and myself. The influence she gains day by day over Victorine, weans from me by degrees my daughter's heart; soon I will be entirely alone in the world."

"Victorine is young and good; you can win her back again."

"No, it is too late already! Still, I do not believe I am so old as to be entirely cut off from all affection. What I cannot find in my family, why should I not seek for elsewhere? Why should I not ask it from you, Jeanne—from you, who are not much happier than myself? We two unfortunates can thus console each other."

Jeanne became still paler, her hands trembled slightly, her heart beat violently; but she did not speak.

The baron, encouraged by this silence, continued: "Yes, Jeanne, I place on you all the affection with which my heart is filled. On you, henceforth, rests the hope of my life. That which neither my wife nor daughter desire, will be yours. Oh! do not deceive yourself! I do not ask you to love me as I love you. I feel that is impossible. I only ask you to allow me to love you. To love! This is not a sufficiently strong expression—for my feelings towards you resemble adoration more than love; it is so pure, so intense. It already absorbs my whole soul. It fills my life up again. You will be the realization of all my desires, as you are the object of all my thoughts."

Jeanne dried some big drops of perspiration on her forehead, but still did not open her lips.

"Believe me, dear child," continued M. de Blanchelande, "it is only at my age that one knows how to love. The love of young men is only one of the thousand distractions of their existence. With us it is life itself. Destiny has been hard for you, until now, my poor Jeanne; you are an orphan, with none to lean upon. Alone in the world—given up as a prey to the wicked, selfish, and hard-hearted; but you have met me. We must change all that. It will be my mission to repair all the wrongs destiny has shown you. What she has taken from you, I will return to you. What she has not given you, you will find in me. You will want for nothing. Your wishes will be fulfilled before they are half formed. I wish to place you where you belong. You are not made to be subjected to obscure and hard work, given up to a precarious fortune. This ought not to be, I will not allow it to be." The Baron de Blanchelande was inspired by his own words—he arose and tried to take Mlle. Derville's hand.

This hand Jeanne withdrew, without affected prudery or ridiculous precipitation, but with unmistakeable firmness. Then raising her limpid eyes, which had a proud, mournful expression, and in which shone the celestial ray of her frank, honest nature, she said: "Monsieur le Baron, of all the trials I have experienced under your roof, this is the most cruel, for humiliation is added to it. Other trials of this nature may be reserved for me, in the course of the desolate life you have pictured; but they will come to me from those who do not know me so well as you do; and who will not know how little I deserve them. I have endured, uncomplainingly, more than one injustice in your house. Your last words drive me away from it. You must see that we can never meet again. Will you be good enough to give orders, that I may be taken to the nearest station. I will not remain here another hour."

The baron was dumbfounded.

Jeanne's calmness, during the whole discourse, had prevented him from suspecting such a denouement. He tried to reply. The young girl would not give h m time.

"I wish to set out as soon as possible," continued she, "and I hoped you would be willing to avoid giving me the trouble of seeking the intervention of Mme de Blanchelande." And without another word, cold, upright, and with implacable resolution, she passed before Victorine's father, who dared not detain her.

CHAPTER XXV.

AN hour later, without seeing again the baron, and after exchanging cold enough adieus with Mme. de Blanchelande, Jeanne was getting into the carriage, when Victorine, seeing she had nothing more to fear from the one who, after being so long her friend, had suddenly become her rival, felt a return of all her old affection.

"I am truly unhappy," said she to Jeanne, "to see you leave thus, without some assured position. But it seems as if ordinary life resembles a boarding-school; one cannot have things as they desire."

"I know that, well."

"Where do you intend going?"

"I do not know."

"What will become of you?"

"I am still ignorant of that."

"If we can be of service to you?"

"That is now an impossibility."

"You reply coldly to me."

"How have you spoken to me for the last week?"

"It is true! Perhaps we have pained you."

"Perhaps!" replied Jeanne, bitterly.

"Well, be better than we have been. Forget the evil, and remember only the good. Jeanne, there has been one unhappy month in our intercourse, but there have been five good years."

"I know that well. It would have been more highly prized if I had left here six weeks ago. I have lived too long already. Farewell."

The carriage was at the foot of the stone steps. Mlle. Derville got in—the coachman took the reins, and the horses started.

"Alone, all alone in the world?" said Jeanne, hiding her face in her hands, as the carriage passed through the principal gateway.

She reviewed the events of the last month, and lived over again those weeks of her existence, which she found very sad.

Only one thing could have consoled her; the thoughts of Maxence, and the glowing future of tenderness and of love that his remembrance should have called before her. But the cruel uncertainty in which he had left her since his departure; this prospect of a journey to Italy, to which he had so easily consented; this rendezvous of the two families—a certain preliminary to a marriage arrangement—would not allow her to yield to these illusions.

The truth appeared implacably evident to her eyes; and the truth but an unceasing struggle, without mercy, in the midst of difficulties of an unknown character; after a debut which had been only a cruel deception.

In the depths of misfortunes, we sometimes feel, as the English poet so well expresses,—"The luxury of woe."

Jeanne sank in the corner of the carriage, and softly, without convulsions or sobs, allowed her tears to flow like two rivers starting from two equal sources.

But the carriage, which rolled over the smooth road like a rocking cradle, suddenly stopped, and the jostle caused Jeanne quickly to raise her head. The baron was at the carriage door, which he had already opened.

Jeanne wished to prevent his entrance, but he jumped in as quick as a flash, and slammed to the door. Was this a signal? Who can say? but the coachman, as if he had received his orders beforehand, whipped up his horses, and they started like an arrow. Jeanne and M. de Blanchelande were thus seated side by side.

There was on the face of the colonel's daughter an expression of such proud indignation and determination, that one glance at her would suffice to make the boldest and most audacious perfectly respectful.

Let us hasten to add that the baron did not range in this category of male-

factors. If nevertheless he had obeyed some bad inspiration, in thus placing himself in Mlle. Derville's path, the sight of her red swollen eyes, her cheeks still wet with her burning tears, her breast heaving with suppressed sobs, would have quickly inspired another state of feeling.

"Goodness, mademoiselle! what is the matter with you?" asked he, with a most deferential manner.

"What is the matter with me! what is the matter with me!" replied Jeanne, with bitterness in her voice and fierceness in its tones. "You dare to ask what is the matter with me? Well, sir? I am indignant with your odious persecution! Ah! I see well, one must pay dearly for all your hospitality, for your carriage as well as your house! I regret not having thought of this before; for rather than submit to it, I would have borrowed a cart from your poorest peasant; and if their fears of you caused them to refuse, leaving you my small amount of baggage, and carrying from your chateau nothing but my honor, I would have gone straight before me by the roads."

"Oh! you hate me then, intensely," said the baron, in a mournful tone.

"No!" replied Jeanne, and her look was more expressive than her words. "No, it is not hate I feel towards you!"

M. de Blanchelande feared this frightful state of excitement. He would have given worlds to be able to soothe her, but he knew not how. To quit her perhaps would do it; but that he did not wish to do at present. He left the seat by her side and sat opposite to her.

"Mademoiselle," he said then, "if I have really lost the right to address anything but your good sense, allow me at least to appeal to that. I believe I have not merited the great wrath you have shown me this morning.

"You have misunderstood me. I see I have inspired you with a most unjustifiable terror. I am a man, and I have the weaknesses of a man. Still I am not a monster, and you must not make me out more horrible than I really am. You are perfectly at home here, since you are in my carriage. If my words unhappily do not reassure you, you have only to speak the word, and I will get out."

"It would have been much better if you had never got in," murmured Jeanne.

"She is without pity," said the baron to himself. "She has not a woman's heart." And he added aloud—

"You are young, mademoiselle; but there are some things you must not deceive yourself about. It is possible I have given too much force to the service I desire to render you—perhaps I have displayed too much ardor in expressing the sincere interest I feel for you. You see that I accuse and do not defend myself. But it seems that such a fault deserves some slight indulgence from the one who has caused me to commit it. This indulgence you have not deigned to accord me; but when you were leaving me, probably for ever, I have not been able to resign myself to your resentment, allowing you to carry away such a false, unjust idea of me. Most likely we will never meet again. This is what you desire. I am deeply afflicted on the contrary, without flattering myself that your movements will be in the least altered by my regrets. My illusion does not extend so far as that; but I have at least the right to beg that you will not carry into your new unknown life these unkind remembrances of me; and that later—calmly, alone—when I am no longer near you, you will reflect on all that has passed between us—you will then appreciate more justly my conduct and intentions. This is all I ask of you, mademoiselle. Can you refuse me this?"

There was such an apparent frankness in Monsieur de Blanchelande's words that Jeanne felt she could no longer doubt him.

She was still young. Personal suffering had not yet had time to harden her against the sorrows of others. The bounteous sources of sympathy were not yet dried up in her beautiful and generous soul. Her nerves soon became quiet, and little by little her anger was appeased.

The baron saw he had gained ground, but he was too cunning to try to profit immediately by his advantages, and to risk by an untimely vivacity, the compromising of his success before it was assured to him.

"Will we not," said he, softly, to Jeanne, "will we not, mademoiselle, separate without resentment, without bitterness, almost like friends?"

"I am not born to hate," said Mlle. Derville, with a slight movement of her head. "You have nothing to fear from me; but as you have just said, this is all you can ask, let us separate at once."

"Very well, we will then part," replied M. de Blanchelande, with a shade of melancholy resignation.

He made a movement as if to leave, but he had such an unhappy air that Mlle. Derville, whose heart could not remain long without pity, felt forced to place her hand in the hand he held out.

"Thanks," said the baron, who kept the little hand in his much longer than was necessary, and ended by carrying it to his lips.

Jeanne raised her head and suddenly became as white as marble. Her eyes met those of a young man on horseback passing the carriage.

The soft road had deadened the noise of his approach, and thus he had surprised them.

Jeanne, seeing the new comer, withdrew or rather snatched her hand from the baron, and hid her face, stifling a cry of anguish.

She had recognised the long-expected one, whom she believed she would never see again. The Count de Bois-Robert!

Maxence, after consenting, out of weariness, to this Italian journey, thus wrestled from his weakness by the maternal will, had felt at last that he could not leave without again seeing Mlle. Derville, without at least saying good-bye, without assuring her of his constancy, without forming, with her, their future plans.

He was resolved, at all hazards, to obtain an interview with her, in the environs of Blanchelande. Gold renders everything possible, and the young man knew how to purchase the needed service. There was but one reproach to this step—it was taken too late, and she whc was the object of it had suffered too much.

The count did not wish to go to the chateau; he intended to linger about till he found some means of communicating with Jeanne. He felt the most intense desire to see her again; as his mother, with an intention more easy to understand than to justify, had risked some slighting insinuations in regard to the baron's devotions to the one she disdainfully denominated as "the governess." This little piece of gratuitous spite did not produce the desired effect. It had increased Maxence's feelings of love by his jealousy, and hastened his determination. When he left the breakfast-table at which Mme. de Bois-Robert had made this unfortunate little campaign, he put his spurs into Ferragus's side, and was hastening at full speed to Blanchelande. At a turn of the road he met the baron's carriage, so that he could not possibly avoid it, even if his surprise had permitted him to think of doing so. A glance into the carriage showed him Victorine's father kissing the hand of Mlle. Derville. Did not this act alone too evidently confirm the suspicions his mother had endeavored to plant in his heart?

Immovable on his horse—riveted to the ground, he seemed at this moment a living statue—he could not take his eyes off of Jeanne's face; of Jeanne, filled with sorrow, bordering on terror, at seeing him.

The precipitation alone, with which Mlle. Derville had withdrawn her hand on seeing Maxence, had given a guilty appearance to an action, in reality so perfectly innocent and so justifiable by all the circumstances. But—but there are moments when one does not reason; when one cannot reason—it is when passion alone reigns in and guides us.

Maxence deceived in his conclusions—as many others, alas! would have been in his place—felt cross his mind a frightful suspicion, which soon changed into a certainty; a false certainty, founded on a mistake, but which was none the less cruel. Indignation and scorn spread suddenly over his beautiful and noble features, which seemed made only to express sweet sentiments and the overflowing of a happy soul. A bitter sardonic smile crossed his lips, and then as if he could endure such a sight no longer, without seeming to remark the despairing movements of Jeanne, who extended her two hands to him as if throwing herself entirely on him, he spurred his horse furiously. Ferragus, surprised by this violent treatment, gave two bounds forwards, and soon was tearing across the fields.

"Oh, go away at once, sir! Oh, my God! for pity's sake, leave me, sir!" said Jeanne to the baron, almost out of her senses, and seeing the most fearful results from this fatal meeting.

"Yes, yes, directly! I am going!" said M. de Blanchelande, annoyed to the greatest extent, and ordering the coachman to stop.

"It is all your fault! All that is your fault!" continued Jeanne, whose despair rendered her an object of pity. "Why did you come? Why did you not leave me when I urged you to do so? You have then sworn to ruin me! Ah! this is the last blow! I only needed this one to complete my misfortunes!" In the exasperation of her unthinking sorrow, forgetting the reserve and discretion which was so natural to her, she did not dream of surrounding her feelings with mystery, which is their greatest charm, in souls as delicate and chaste as hers.

"How she loves him!" said M. de Blanchelande to himself, with bitter jealousy. "Those young ones are so fortunate! Why did he return so soon? An idea of my wife's, I suppose! Why could she not have left him for two months longer in Germany?" The baron felt the moment of sentiment had gone, and the only effect of prolonging his stay would be to make himself detested by the young girl; he had therefore ordered the carriage to stop, and after coldly saluting Mlle. Derville, disappeared, muttering, "Who knows! Life is long! Mountains do not come together; but men and women meet often! Farewell, till we meet again, my hard-hearted one!"

Jeanne continued her journey alone, given up to such paroxysms of grief that she was almost past feeling. God gives a certain amount of suffering to his creatures, and when the measure is full they do not feel what comes afterwards. There were moments, however, when her agony seemed to be doubled—for instance, when she re-called the look Maxence had given her as he left. When she said to herself, "Perhaps he believed he had the right to despise her." At this thought she felt her whole being revolt. The noise of the carriage wheels on the rough pavements of Châteauneuf roused her from her stupor.

She knew Mme. de Bois-Robert owned a house in this pretty little village, where, before Paris had absorbed all of France, some noble families of Sologne had established their winter quarters. She could not help looking on the emblazoned arches for the escutcheon that she might some day have the right to bear—she did not see it. This last illusion faded away.

The coachman, who was ordered to take Mlle. Derville to the Orleans depot, crossed Châteauneuf without stopping, and threaded the long route which follows the banks of the Loire to the sources of the Loiret.

Ah, this route! With what joy had she passed over it in this identical carriage, only a few weeks before. Hope then smiled on her—and now? Now it was despair that ruled her heart.

When they reached the depot the servants of Blanchelande, who were jealous, as inferiors usually are, and who looked upon this young girl as an enemy, whom their master had treated for so long as a friend and an equal, threw down her "package," (so-called in the railroad dialect) at the door of the waiting-room and drove off before she had time to turn around. The train did not pass till four o'clock—now it was just two.

This was the first time Jeanne had ever been thrown on her own resources and compelled to look out for herself. Until now, others had taken care of her. She was sincerely embarrassed, as was evident to all around.

A young clerk, who had a compassionate nature, offered her a seat, and politely inquired where she wished to go.

To speak truly, the poor girl did not know. She felt abandoned in this vast world—that all corners of the earth were equally indifferent to her.

"Alas! I do not know myself!" replied she, ingenuously.

"Oh! then mademoiselle travels for her own pleasure?" continued the employee, asking for nothing better than to carry on a conversation with this young and beautiful creature who was entirely alone, and did not know where she was going.

"For my own pleasure!—oh, no sir!" replied Jeanne, quickly, raising her beautiful head.

The young man looked more closely at her. Her eyes showed she had been crying, and her whole face bore the marks of such sorrow that the youth felt himself seized with an involuntry respect when brought in contact with such deep grief. He dared not continue his attempt at a familiar conversation.

"Mademoiselle," said he, touching his gold-laced cap, "the train for Bordeaux passes in an hour; the Paris train in two—I will place your baggage in a safe place, and call you when the gates are open."

As he was going away, Jeanne recalled him. An idea came to her. When one does not know where to go they generally return to their native place. A species of instinct leads us towards our cradle, as if we should regain our strength by merely touching the earth where we have taken our first steps.

"Sir," said Mlle. Derville, raising her beautiful, timid eyes to the young clerk, "I wish to go to Avranches! It is there that I——; but I do not know the road."

"Train to Normandy, connects with l'Ouest; at Tours the traveller changes cars; takes train for Mans, Argentan, Alençon, Falaise; re-takes the direct line to Mezidon; quits the railroad at Carentan, and continues the route by stage," said the young man, with great volubility, suddenly returning to his business. "If mademoiselle pleases, I will take her ticket and inform her when it is time to start?"

"Oh, sir! I shall be so much obliged to you!"

"A first-class ticket?" continued the clerk, examining the elegant but simple toilette of Mlle. Derville. Jeanne had no false pride, no desire to appear above her position.

"No, sir," said she, sweetly; "a second, if you will please obtain one for me; that will answer."

"Nothing easier, mademoiselle. Between ourselves," said he, with a sort of bonhommie, "it is rather the best for the night; you have more room to sleep in. But not to be impertinent, may I ask if you came from a distance?"

"From the Chateau de Blanchelande."

"Ah, indeed! On the plateau the other side of Châteauneuf—a pretty place. But it is long since you breakfasted—are you not perchance hungry?"

"I believe I am."

"You should be very certain of that," said he, smiling, "the stomach is not a deceiver. Permit me to order you something?"

Without waiting for her reply, he went to the restaurant and ordered a simple dinner for the beautiful unknown, which she did indeed greatly need.

"There are still some kind hearts left in this world," murmured Jeanne, with tears in her eyes, as she saw him moving away.

The clerk settled her, two hours later, in the ladies' car, where she found herself alone. "You will be able to sleep as soundly here, as in your own little white bed," said he, as he handed her her bag.

"Thank you for all your kindness!" said Jeanne, holding out her hand to him, with the gesture of a great lady, after first taking off her glove. The action was nothing in itself, the manner was everything.

The clerk came from a good family, stranded at Orleans, like a floating brand from the shipwreck of Parisian life. He had been in the world, and understood the delicacy and grace of the proceeding. "Ah! mademoiselle," stammered he, "at present it is I who must thank you."

The train started for Paris—the clerk stood motionless, watching the car which bore away this charming apparition, which had come to dazzle an hour of his monotonous existence.

"Well, no!" said he to himself, "one does not see such a thing on the 'line' every day. Hey! with what a grand air she extended her little hand, ungloving it—'if you please.' One might call her a princess in disguise—and I have ventured to press this pretty white hand, instead of kissing it like a marquis. You will never again have the luck, my good man, to place such a girl as that in the second-class car! Indeed, by my faith! to-day I would rather be conductor of the train than superintendent of the depôt—I would see her again at every station." An approaching train interrupted these reflections.

"Duty before all!" said he, shrugging his shoulders, "controllers do not please themselves. I will resume these rose colored ideas after the departure of *No.* 30."

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN we return to our native country, after an absence of many years, we always find sad changes. What *vacancies* in the ranks that were formerly so full! How many houses that opened so joyously to receive us are now closed! Even the external appearance of the streets is no longer the same; such a building is pulled down; this one was not built; another exists no longer. One wanders, as a stranger, among his own without being recognised; and if those we call by the sweet title of "our own" no longer exist—if the country is only a solitude for us—oh! then it is with indescribable anguish of the heart that we revisit the familiar places of our infancy, whose memory has followed us through our journey of life.

Such were Jeanne's feelings when she entered Avranches, after an absence of eight years. She returned at dusk; that melancholy hour which makes everything still more gloomy within and around us. She arrived tired out from her journey, disgusted with the slowness of the stage-coach, which had walked from one village to the other, while she knew not where she would lay her head. She alighted at the little village inn, to which the driver took her. One night is soon passed; but the room they gave her was neither very clean nor very comfortable. She had undoubtedly been unaccustomed, at St. Denis, to any sybaritic luxuries; but everything at St. Denis bore at least a latent grandeur and nobility, that pleased her naturally aristocratic tastes. On leaving there, she had found herself surrounded by rich luxuries in the enchantments of the Chateau de Blanchelande—a fleeting, deceitful resting-place, in the world of luxury and elegance. This was the first time she had been brought into contact with the commoner realities. Life, after indulging her all this time, spared her no longer its harsh apprenticeship; and she endured it without even the mitigation of a gradual change.

She slept uncomfortably, and dreamed bad dreams on a hard bed.

The next morning, her first care was to advise M. Gravis, the notary, and family friend, of her arrival.

The honorable notary came immediately, as fast as his little limbs could bring him, carrying his corporation before him, his trinket chain dancing on his vest, embroidered with flowers, his face freshly shaved, his hair cut short, white cravat, and clothed in black, though it was scarcely nine o'clock in the morning. He wished thus to show all the etiquette of a perfect notary—and the notary respects uses and customs, and conforms himself to traditions.

The gold spectacles shone with a serene and particularly imposing majesty on the ridge of a nose on which their equilibrium was often in danger, and required a frequent movement and nervous start to replace them in their original position.

Master Gravis, being led to Jeanne's room, knocked three times on the door before opening it, made three bows on the threshold before entering, then advanced towards Mlle. Derville, scarcely looking at her.

If Jeanne had been in any other circumstances, she would have found it hard to preserve her gravity on seeing this grotesque little personage in front of her. But the moment would have been badly chosen for this arch gaiety, and the thought did not even enter her mind.

"Pardon me for troubling you, sir," said she to the notary, offering him one of the two chairs she had found in her room.

Gravis, as if he was much moved by the harmonious sound of this voice, so rich and full, raised his head quickly, and fixed on our heroine the two little eyes which sparkled behind the glasses of his spectacles. The notary had, a

long time ago, seen start for Paris a little girl at the most unbecoming age of awkward youth. He saw return a beautiful creature, clothed with the most precious endowments of youth; and, notwithstanding her sorrows, brilliant as a flower.

The power of beauty, they tell us, subjugates tigers in the depths of the woods. Notaries are not tigers. Gravis was conquered instantly; and when Jeanne Derville introduced herself, for he had not recognised her, he searched in his vocabulary for the most gallant forms to express his admiration, which was only too evident. Not daring to allude directly to it, he spoke first, and spoke well, of the great affection that had formerly united the colonel and himself; he gave much force to his protestations, that he was prepared to carry the sentiments he had felt for the father over to the daughter.

"I believe you, and thank you, sir," said Mlle. Derville, when she could get in a word of reply between two sentences of his long monologue. "I know you have not waited until to-day to prove your devotion to me and mine."

"Doubtlessly, doubtlessly, mademoiselle; but it seems to me—I feel—I am certain that I have never before felt such a desire to serve and be useful to you."

"So much the better, sir. Keep for me, I beseech you, these good inclinations. I may be obliged to call on them sooner than you imagine."

"The sooner the better, mademoiselle," said the polite notary.

Jeanne explained her situation, and did not hide the necessity she was in of finding immediate employment to enable her to live.

All these things Gravis already knew; but it seemed that Jeanne had a way of speaking which threw new light on the subject.

"And it is to obtain this position you have come to our village?" asked he, with much emotion, taking off his spectacles and carefully wiping them several times. "Hem!—hem!—that is serious! But tell me, my dear young lady, can you give lessons on the piano?"

"Perhaps; but I ought first to inform you that I have not come to Avranches with the idea of permanently remaining in this place."

"Ah!"

"No; but, unconsciously, you, sir, have been one cause of my journey."

"I?"

"You! Before entering my new life, I intend to pay my debts of gratitude; and you are my first creditor. I have wished to come, to thank you for the wise and devoted care with which you have arranged my meagre fortune. Oh, do not deny this!" added she, as the notary modestly shook his head. "Do not deny this. It is useless, for I know all. I know also, that all you have done for me has been for the memory of my father, whose friend you were—and the motives to which I place your good offices render them more precious still."

"What I have done is very little," replied M. Gravis, "and is not worth your thanks. But"—added he, with the crafty shrewdness of a business man, increased by the caution of a Norman—"have you come here only to see *me?*"

"No, sir!" replied Jeanne, with an accent of sorrowful frankness. "I have come for the dead still more than for the living. I have wished to kneel on the two tombs; and to find here much sorrow, but many dear remembrances."

"Mademoiselle, such feelings honor you, and I am certain they will bring you happiness."

"Will you have the goodness, sir, to get some one to take me to the Rosery?"

"To take you there! Oh! pardon me, mademoiselle; but I look upon it as a duty as well as a pleasure to take you there myself. There is not in all Avranches such a trotter as my gray, and in little over three quarters of an hour"—

Seeing a slight hesitation in the young girl, he added with much tact—

"My daughter will accompany us, with your permission."

"Ah! you have a daughter! I shall be charmed to make her acquaintance."

"She is about your age—less beautiful than yourself—bless me! slightly provincial, but a good creature, with great capabilities. Since the death of her poor mother she has kept my house. But I will marry her soon. You know there is not much amusement at Av-

ranches, though we have a population of seven thousand five hundred, an imperial magistrate, and an under-prefect."

"What hour shall we start?" said Mlle. Derville, who thought all this useless.

"Very soon—this morning. I have some signatures to authenticate, though I leave the heavy work to my clerks."

"Any time that suits you, will suit me."

"You wish always to remember that I have been your father's friend. You are right," added he, increasing a little the strength of this intimacy, which was perhaps not so great during M. Derville's life as since his death. "The colonel never inspired in any one such absolute devotion as in myself. He returned it by an affection I shall never forget, and I will not allow his worthy daughter to remain any longer in this miserable apartment in the inn of the Grand Turk, whilst I have five or six empty chambers. My daughter would never forgive me."

Jeanne had no particular desire to stay any longer at the Grand Turk; so she accepted the kind offer of her father's old friend, whose highest desire was to become hers. An hour later she entered the house of the dignitary by the porte cochere, which was decorated with the escutcheon of the arms of the empire.

Mlle. Gravis, notified by her father, was dressed up to receive the Parisian. This expression had an unfortunate signification for her. A silk dress that the dress-maker had sent her from Rennes was solemnly taken from her closet, a chain of gold wound twice round her neck hung on her breast in a double cascade, and three fingers out of five on each of her hands were decorated with diamond rings.

It was rather early in the day for this great display of wealth; but in this good village of Avranches they do not make so many toilets as in Paris. They dress in the morning for the whole day.

Mlle. Gravis waited for Mlle. Derville in the large parlor, furnished as in the time of the first empire, and which had not been opened for a month. The father of this charming person performed the introduction in the most precise manner:

"Mlle. Jeanne Derville—

"Mlle. Rose-Celeste Gravis."

The two young girls were not particularly pleased with each other. Jeanne was so taken up with her own troubles and affairs, that the grand toilet of Rose-Celeste was entirely thrown away.

Rose-Celeste, for her part, considered it a mark of disrespect that Jeanne had not changed her simple travelling dress. Jeanne's reserved manners she considered coldness and disdain for herself. The unpleasant impressions she received from these details were never effaced.

As for our notary, he was charmed to welcome into his own house the daughter of Colonel Derville, one of the most brilliant scholars of Saint Denis, who was covered with the laurels of success, and what was more, a very beautiful person—which always pleases masculine vanity. He did not even notice the commencement of silent hostility in the breast of his daughter, which he might have divined before seeing her, if he had better known the human heart, especially that of woman. But one cannot know everything—even though one is an imperial notary.

They breakfasted slowly, and at twelve precisely the "one-horse wagon demi-fortune," drawn by the stout *Percheronne*, of the dappled gray coat, left the stable with a startling noise, and awaited Monsieur Gravis's orders in the street, under the eyes of all loungers, who wondered what rich will or magnificent contract the official minister was going to arrange in the neighborhood.

A few minutes later the travellers were seated in the comfortable vehicle, and were rolling towards Bretagne. The journey was quickly and silently accomplished.

Gravis respected Jeanne's meditations; and his daughter, who was still out of sorts, did not think it necessary to make any fresh exertions for a stranger, who seemed so incapable of appreciating them.

They arrived in less than an hour.

Years had effaced nothing from the faithful memory of Mlle. Derville. As soon as she saw the Rosery from a distance she recognised all the details of the place

so familiar to her infancy. The little hill behind the house, crowned with its grove of apple trees, at this moment laden with their rich-colored fruit; the grass-plat in front, on which she had so often seated herself, and the gravel-walk, over which her little feet had so many times raced.

The gray, who was used to coming here, stopped before the iron gate. Jeanne's tenant recognised the carriage of the notary, and hastened to open it. He had formerly been a soldier, and now, past middle-age, was ending his life as one ends a beautiful day, in that deep serenity which is alone given by the consciousness of duty performed.

"Oh! good morning, captain," said Gravis, who had jumped out. "Here is Mlle. Derville, your landlady, who has come to look at her house."

"You are at home here, mademoiselle," said the captain, with a simplicity which was not devoid of an honest grace. He offered Jeanne his arm, and did his best to exercise the duties of hospitality. He offered a slight repast to the young girls.

"I thank you," replied Jeanne, "but I wish to give you as little trouble as possible. All I ask is to be allowed to see perhaps for the last time the house where I have lived, the chamber where my father died."

"For the last time! Oh, Mademoiselle!" said Gravis, in his most pathetic tone, "how can you speak thus?"

"We must consider everything, dear sir," replied the young girl. "Alas! who knows? I may be obliged to sell the Rosery."

"Oh no! I know your feelings too well not to be certain, that you will never consent to part with this little corner of the earth, which encloses your sweetest remembrances."

"One wishes not always that which one does, and we do not always that which we wish!" replied Jeanne in a low tone.

They entered the house. The notary had let it with all its furniture, and the new tenant being an exact and neat man, having found things to his taste, had kept them in the same state. He had altered nothing in M. Derville's chamber—one could have imagined the colonel had left it the same morning. By an inspiration innate to a great heart, the captain had the delicacy to leave Jeanne alone. The young girl had burst into tears, when no one saw her, on the couch where her father had breathed his last and had given her his last kiss. She remained a long time alone in this chamber. One is even ashamed to give way to sorrow. When she went down there was sadness in her soul and on her face, but she was more calm.

On reaching the last step, she was going into the little saloon, where her friends were waiting for her, when she was suddenly seized by two strong arms, lifted from the floor, and kissed twice on both cheeks.

"Oh! mon Dieu; is it really possible?" cried a broken voice, "I see you again. It is truly you, my dear young lady! my beautiful little Jeanne! Oh! mon Dieu! mon Dieu! let me look at you! How you have grown! and then how beautiful you have become—though too pale. Ah! now I can go with the two others, since I have seen you once more. I will tell them you have not forgotten them—nor me either—this is so, Mlle. Jeanne?"

"Neither them, nor thee, nor any one, my poor Jacqueline!" said Jeanne, pressing in her delicate palms the rough but loyal hands of the uncouth Bretonne, who had reared her, and whose fierce sorrow we once saw burst like a roaring lion in Mme. de Boutaric's house, when the stern marquise had refused to take her with the child.

Being no longer able to take care of her master, Jacqueline took care of the house; seeing no more the people, she attached herself to the furniture. When the notary rented the furnished house to the captain, the latter was glad enough to accept the services of the Bretonne. It was only necessary to hear how faithfully and devotedly she had served those who had preceded him at the Rosery. He was much moved, and took the servant with the house.

Surrounded by so many objects which recalled the family she had served, Jacqueline had kept them in her memory as she did her creed. Jeanne, the only survivor of the Dervilles; now engrossed the thoughts of this rude but noble nature, who made this attachment the greatest happiness of her life. She had

suffered by this long absence; she had thought herself forgotten, and she had pardoned the forgetfulness; for, in her humble loyal affection, she believed she owed everything to others, and that others owed nothing to her.

During Mme. de Boutaric's life, Jacqueline had not been so unhappy. For the marquise—a good judge of the heart—had understood the high and sincere feelings of the humble servant, and to prove her appreciation had often given her news of the little scholar. After her death, the poor woman was entirely cut off from this last consolation. She remained completely ignorant of all that concerned this dear idol whom she continually worshipped. One can understand the ardor and overflowing of her affections when now she saw Mlle. Derville. She had not seen her enter the house; she was unaware of her presence; indeed for her the meeting was like a thunder-clap. Joy makes one afraid, but it does not kill. Jacqueline recovered, but not without having felt such violent and long emotions that she said, ingenuously, instead of making her happy it had brought her much evil.

"How good it is to feel one is loved so much!" murmured Jeanne, as it were aside; and she involuntarily thought of the *one* she wished to love her, and who now, perhaps, believed he had reason to despise her. It was one sorrow more—not the less cruel, because but one of a long list of many others.

Jacqueline saw the shadow which spread over the face of the young girl.

"What do you expect, mademoiselle?" said she, in a low tone. "God is the master. When he orders, we must obey."

These simple words recalled Jeanne's wandering thoughts, and brought her from the living to the dead.

"Yes," said she, "you are right, Jacqueline. By my faith!" continued she, passing her hand over her brow and eyes, "yes, thou art right, my good girl. What God wills, his creatures ought to will for themselves.

"But listen. I have not come here only to see the Rosery, but also to kneel on my parents' tomb. Leave the rest, and come with me to the cemetery. I wish to be accompanied there by thee."

"The fact is, mademoiselle, that no person except yourself loved them as I did."

The young girl went out by a door which led to the enclosure, across which there was a path leading directly to the field of eternal repose.

CHAPTER II.

WITHOUT wishing to reproduce the sentimental elegy so well done by Gray, one finds a deep charm, full of emotion and sadness, in a pious visit to a village cemetery. There no proud monuments—no false, bombastic inscriptions carved in marble! Nearly everywhere, nameless tombs, covered with the green verdure; here and there some crosses of black wood; yet more rarely, a white stone. Still, however, this dust that you tread on with your feet was formerly alive. Hearts once beat in the breasts of these skeletons. Ardent passions once reigned under these brows to-day sleeping their eternal sleep.

Mlle. Derville had never seen her father's tomb. She only knew it was placed near that of the wife he had loved so well—his wife, Jeanne's mother. The young girl took the path her feet had so often trod. The two twin graves were not much better than those by which they were surrounded. Two names and two dates on each piece of black marble—this was all. But they were surrounded by flowers, kept by the hand of an attentive friend.

"It is thou, Jacqueline," said Jeanne, looking at the Bretonne; "it is thou who hast planted and watered these."

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"You kind friend, how can I thank you for all that?"

"Oh, mademoiselle, you have rewarded me for all that by saying—'Come, pray with me for them.'"

They both then prayed, Jeanne kneeling on the graves.

She prayed earnestly, full of faith and love. When she arose, she felt more strong, more firm, more capable of facing life with calmness and submitting courageously to its trials. She seated herself on the grass, at the foot of these cherished tombs, and looked around, with her eyes still full of tears, as if she

wished to engrave their likenesses and remembrances on her soul, which henceforward nothing could efface.

On the other sides of the living hedges which enclosed them, she could see the sea rolling in its gray sand, with its large, ever-restless waves, whose plaintive moan was heard in the silence around.

At the horizon, Mount Saint Michel, silent and immovable, raised her grand and gloomy silhouette.

It was a beautiful autumn day, with a blue sky, of that delicate shade which is never known in the brightness of a southern sky—a true Normandy heaven; but it was under these skies that Jeanne had first opened her eyes to the light, and she found a charm in their melancholy grace.

"Is it, mademoiselle," said Jacqueline, who saw she was absorbed in her contemplation; "is it, mademoiselle, because you do not dislike this country?"

"Dislike it? No indeed! I love it! it is here I would wish to live—if—"

"If?"

"If I was able."

"Oh! as if one could not always do as they wish! In the first place everything is cheap here. It is not like Paris, where it seems they sell everything—even the bad water that they make you drink. For your home, you shall have the Rosery, which is as much as to say the prettiest place in the department. For your servant you shall have me, who will not cost you a great deal."

"Well, my poor Jacqueline, even all that will not be enough—I must still be fed."

"Do not be afraid of that."

"Eh! what will you do?"

"It will not take a great deal to keep you! after working for you, I will work hard for others—and with what I can earn——"

"And do you think my father's daughter could thus accept thy charity?"

"You will return it all to me some day, when you are married."

Mlle. Derville only shook her head. Then, seeing that Jacqueline looked at her silently and sadly, she soon said—

"And I, also—I must work—so that the two who sleep here, near us, under the sod, may not be ashamed of me, and who perhaps hear us now."

"Work! You! With such hands? What could you do?"

"Oh! I certainly could not plough," replied Jeanne, with a faint smile; "but every one has their furrow to turn, and mine will not be less hard than others."

"I did not think in Paris you had any ground to cultivate."

"No; but minds are to be cultivated as well as earth. I will give lessons, if you wish to know all. I have been taught; I will now teach others. They have made me an upright woman; what I have received, I will try and impart. Do you understand?"

"Not very well. You intend to teach. You! a colonel's daughter!"

"I know several general's daughters who would be delighted if they could do as much."

"That makes no difference; it is a disagreeable employment."

"Not always; what would you when one can do nothing else? Men make their own way, and they can select. I cannot be judge, lawyer, nor doctor; can I? There remain to us women only three or four employments, from which I have chosen the one that seems to suit me best."

"Mademoiselle, all this is very sad!"

"Many other things are also sad," said Jeanne, raising her eyes to heaven, "and we must be resigned. But we must return. We have already made this poor M. Gravis wait a long time, and he has, I know, a great deal to attend to. Come!"

Jeanne gathered a flower from each tomb, and started down the path.

The notary and the captain came to meet her. Rose-Celeste thought it more dignified to remain in the parlor.

"What do you think of her?" asked Gravis of his companion. "There can be but one opinion on that subject—she is charming!"

"She will be a perfect wife!"

"She makes me regret I am not twenty-five years again."

"Ah! if I were only fifty!" murmured the notary to himself.

In the meanwhile Mlle. Derville advanced towards them on a straight path bordered by acacias, with their round tops and leaning branches, forming a triumphal arch of green above her head.

"I thank you, sir," said she, addressing the notary first; "I owe you, to-day, a great consolation and happiness."

"Those who may be fortunate enough to be of service to you are the obliged ones," replied Gravis.

"This is your home," said the captain, in his turn, "from the moment you enter into the court of the cottage. I am only the guardian of the house, and you will always find it in the same state you leave it to-day."

"You are almost as good as M. Gravis," said Jeanne, extending her hand; "to say this, is to say everything," added she, looking at the notary, who had assumed great importance.

The carriage was called. The captain helped in the young girl.

"We will see you soon again?" said he in a tone of parental affection.

"My destiny is so uncertain that I cannot promise anything," replied Mlle. Derville; "all I can say to you is, that my thoughts will often return here. I am mistaken—they will always be here."

Rose-Celeste, who had taken no part in this conversation, appeared to be absorbed in contemplating the hands of her watch, and pointed out the hour to the notary.

"You remember everything," said Gravis; "and your father always forgets. Adieu, captain, I must pass an hour in my study before dinner. Go on, Peter, let us be off."

"Who knows when we will see her here again?" said Jacqueline, looking after the carriage.

Jeanne was woman enough, too sagacious not to see how badly disposed Mlle. Gravis felt towards her. She had already experienced too well the sad bitterness of forced hospitality to be affronted again. She would willingly have left Avranches the next morning. But the kindness and obligingness of the excellent father of this very disagreeable young lady, the services he had already rendered her, and what he was still disposed to do for her, deserved some return, and would have been badly repaid by this sudden announcement of her departure.

In the evening during the family dinner, the conversation turned on Mme. de Boutaric.

Jeanne spoke of her from her heart, and in affecting words expressed her sorrow and regret.

Gravis listened with visible pleasure; one might say he enjoyed the enthusiasm of her soul, even though he was not the object.

"If she feels thus towards Mme. de Boutaric, who only intended to benefit her, what would she feel if she had a real subject—a serious subject—of gratitude?"

Such feelings are dangerous when inspired by a young, beautiful and seductive woman, and experienced by an imperial royal notary, who has passed his fiftieth year, and is afflicted with a disagreeable, overbearing daughter, and is growing rapidly stout.

The name of the marquise, and the remembrance of her unfinished will, led naturally to the question of Jeanne's future. M. Gravis touched slightly on the subject.

"Do not let us speak of the absent," said Mlle. Derville, with a forced gaiety and indifference she was far from feeling; "my future belongs to me—the future is all I have."

"One who has friends has no right to speak so," said the notary, stifling a sigh which, if Mlle. Rose-Celeste had not been present, would have burst from his full heart.

"Dear M. Gravis," replied Jeanne, sadly, "*I have had* friends. Alas! I am only eighteen years, and I use already the past tense. Yes, I have had friends—and I know what friendship costs."

"Now you calumniate life and human nature."

"I think not. Friendship—that noble sentiment—went up to heaven with ancient righteousness; and do you know what is now left in the world? Unions, but no friendships; trivial, slight unions, whose only aim is pleasure, and which are dissolved of themselves when one of the parties can no longer follow in the same flowery path."

"Oh! mademoiselle, do you believe what you say?"

"I am indeed forced to believe it—but there are some exceptions," added she, placing her fine white hand in the large one of the notary—whilst Mlle. Gravis laughed scornfully, showing so entirely

the color of her teeth, that it might have been designated the yellow laugh.

"Exceptions prove the rule!" continued Mlle. Derville, looking at Rose-Celeste. "The fact is, dear, good master, that your very humble servant, who is only a poor girl, cannot allow herself to enjoy your hospitality any longer. To-morrow morning you will sign her passport, and she will start in pursuit of that bald goddess that is called opportunity, and which pursuit, in common prose, means, try to obtain a situation."

"To-morrow is entirely too soon!" replied M. Gravis, in the most light and indifferent manner he could assume, without even looking at Jeanne, for he felt the formidable eyes of his daughter resting heavily upon him.

"One cannot leave too soon when the end is far off and the route very difficult."

"One always leaves too soon for those that are left," replied the notary.

"Oh! mon Dieu! if she were only going this evening! and that they would let the subject rest!" thought Rose-Celeste.

"I do not wish to importune you," continued M. Gravis; "only you have perhaps forgotten that to-morrow will be Sunday, and I would advise you not to start on that day to seek for fortune."

"You are right," said Jeanne, glad of the opportunity of pleasing him; "I forget the days. These constant journeys keep you from knowing how time goes. I will be most happy to stay with you till Monday."

"I know you are an early riser," said M. Gravis, in a low tone, as she was leaving the table; "to-morrow morning before mass I should like to see you in my study for a few minutes—I have something important to say to you."

Jeanne mutely acquiesced; and, worn out by her emotions and the fatigue of yesterday's journey, she retired at once to her chamber.

The next morning, whilst Rose-Celeste was putting the finishing touches to the toilet destined to heighten her charms, and to cause more than one distraction among her devoteds, Jeanne, who had not even opened her trunks, came down in her simple elegant travelling-dress, and knocked slightly at the study door.

The door opened immediately, but it was not Gravis who stood before Mlle. Derville. Scrupulous observers of the Sunday's repose, all the young clerks, paid by the month, had arranged all the papers the evening before, and were very careful not to show themselves again. Alone, the poor man of order, father of a family, nearly fifty years old, who worked at his documents, kept the study, piling up roll after roll, and making a joyful consummation of stamped paper at seventy cents a folio.

The impression he felt on seeing the young girl resembled that which you and I would feel on seeing a vision from the next world! Never had such an exhibition of distinction, elegance, and grace passed before his dazzled eyes! One look showed Jeanne the triumph she had gained over this simple soul; and, as a woman is always a woman, she was internally flattered, and thanked him with a smile.

"Is M. Gravis here?" asked she in her sweetest voice, and with her most charming manner.

The humble scribe remained silent for a few moments, as if he had not understood her.

Jeanne repeated her question more softly still.

"He is in his office," said the clerk, at last recovering his senses, and he showed Jeanne into the sanctuary where the patron, as they called him, consulted personally with his clients.

Gravis, when he saw Mlle. Derville, left the leather chair in which he had been so majestically enthroned, and met her at the door, and made her sit near him in a solemn manner.

"Punctual as a chronometer," said he, looking at his bronze clock. "Punctuality is even the first quality of youth, and also of middle age. With this, one can unconsciously accomplish everything. But ought I to be astonished at any of your virtues? Are you not perfect in all things?"

"You would take back all that before eating a bushel of salt with me," replied Jeanne, with a smile.

"Believe me, mademoiselle, I should not be afraid to try."

"It is not very long since I obeyed every sound of the clock, and it is no trouble for me to be punctual, espe

cially with you, whose every moment counts."

"I do not waste my time, but it would be better employed if I consecrated it always to your service."

"A poor client! I pity your practice if it has nothing more profitable than me."

"You are, however, the last I will wish to lose," said the notary, with animation.

"This proves how disinterested you are."

"Each one, mademoiselle, attends to his interests as he thinks best."

Jeanne, remembering the Baron of Blanchelande, and his past gallantries, felt a vague feeling of fear, and resolved to be on her guard.

"I believe," said she, coldly, "that you have urged me to visit your study to speak on serious affairs."

"So she does not believe this serious enough," thought the poor notary.

But Mlle. Derville's tone roused him to himself, and he became instantly the man of business.

"Behold," said he, opening a bundle of papers, "the state of your property to-day. Will you look over them?"

"I believe," said Jeanne, with a careless gesture, not even looking at the papers he handed her, "that the account is not hard to settle; rather fortunate if it is balanced by two ciphers, the one in the assets, the other in the debts."

The notary took from the bundle a large paper, covered with figures ruled in separate columns, and wished to read, article by article, all this "Greek" to Jeanne.

"Do not give yourself so much trouble," said the young girl; "I will be contented to hear the sum total—that I have already been informed of by madame la superintendante."

"Very well—as you please," said M. Gravis. "Know, then, that when all the debts are paid, nothing will be left you from your father's and mother's estates but the little enclosure of the Rosery, and its furniture. The whole is rented for five hundred francs to Captain Laurent, on a lease which has still five years to run, by myself; and I do not hesitate to say it is well rented. You have then five hundred francs rent precisely, mademoiselle; or rather, you will have them, for the law has dedicated them for three years longer to the creditors of the estate."

Jeanne heard this positive precise statement with a calmness that astonished the notary, who was unaccustomed to such resignation among his honorable Normandy clients. The poor child had positively declared that she already knew her situation, but the notary could not believe they had explained it to her so clearly.

"I received my income when I left school, and I found it very convenient."

"What income?"

"A modest pension that the Legion of Honor gives for a few years to certain scholars."

"That is fortunate! I did not know of it!"

"Five hundred francs a year," continued Mlle. Derville, "in Paris, is not enough to buy bread and water—positively."

"Mme. de Boutaric is much to blame!"

"She owed me nothing."

"One always owes you when it is in their power to give you."

"That is the opinion of a kind friend, but not of a judicial counsel. At all events, there is nothing for me to do today, but bend to unfortunate circumstances. They are stronger than myself. Complaints are useless, recriminations foolish; in my school, they taught me above everything to use reason and practical good sense."

Jeanne said this with a simple frank air, which showed she really felt it.

"I see, with pleasure," said the notary, "that you understand clearly your position, that you see things as they are without the slightest illusion. This is for the best. Illusion might be fatal to you. But the interest I have always felt for, and will always feel for you, authorizes me to ask your plans."

"Oh! Monsieur Gravis, to work for my living! there is only one reply possible to your question."

"You are young, mademoiselle, full of courage, but also of inexperience. You will soon find yourself overcome by difficulties, which you do not even suspect. To work for one's living—if you only knew what that means to a

woman! To live by your own work, that is impossible!"

"Difficult, I will allow; impossible, no! besides, I am not allowed to choose. What I do, I am compelled to do. You know that perfectly."

"Still, if you desire to do so—"

"I wish to do all that is right, good, and honest."

"The social law does not require a woman to work."

"No! without doubt—when she has ten thousand pounds per annum."

"She has had natural protectors created for her."

"Protectors! Oh! what do you mean by that expression?" asked the colonel's daughter, with some haughtiness. "What is your meaning of a protector? A father? I am an orphan! A husband? I am unmarried! Yes," said Jeanne, with a rush of bitterness to her lips, for the recollections of Maxence crossed her heart like a red-hot iron. "There is happiness in being unmarried."

"You calumniate us," said M. Gravis. "I must exonerate my sex."

Here Jeanne felt a visible uneasiness.

"Listen, mademoiselle," continued Gravis. "I am aware I am no longer in my first youth."

"Alas! not even in the second," thought the young girl.

"I am not so very old, however. I am just fifty-four. I do not ask an intense passion from my wife, like the heroes of a novel—a foolish race which makes a sad figure in real life. But if you think you are capable of feeling for me an affection, mixed with confidence and esteem; if this affection is strong enough to induce you to deign to become my wife; the charge of your life belongs to me, and you will be henceforward free from all forethought and care."

Notwithstanding the oratorical precautions of the notary, the proposition was so strange and unexpected, that the young girl thought at first she had not understood him correctly. But Gravis's questioning looks did not leave her long in doubt. She must reply.

"And your daughter?" stammered she.

This was truly the best objection she could raise, the only one that would not hurt the feelings of the poor aspirer, as she placed on other than personal grounds, the cause of the refusal she must make him.

"Rose-Celeste! Well! I will make a sacrifice. I will give her a fine marriage-portion; and let her marry the clerk who will be in love with it."

"To love the marriage settlements!" thought Jeanne, who could hardly help smiling.

"Say only that you consent, and I will arrange everything—no obstacles nor difficulties will stop me. I will smooth everything. The only thing that I ask is that you will love me a little—or rather—let me love you a great deal."

"How easy he thinks this is to do!" thought the beautiful creature, stealing a quick look at the notary, who certainly was not very attractive in his appearance. Then in her gentlest voice she said, "M. Gravis, I am truly touched, most truly grateful; I do not know how I can thank you sufficiently."

"By accepting me!" said the notary, with unexpected energy, holding out his hand to the young girl.

Mlle. Derville took no notice of the interruption or the movement.

"I do not know," she went on, "how to thank you for this fresh proof of your goodness, added to so many others; but the only way I can prove I am not unworthy of it—is by refusing!"

This sort of reasoning seemed as singular to the notary as his logic had been to her, and he signified by his head that he did not understand her very well.

"Yes," continued Jeanne, in a firmer tone, "I am infinitely grateful for your generous offer; but a union between us is an absolutely impossible event. All is on one side, nothing on the other. You would soon see, dear sir, that you had made a very bad bargain."

"Because I have fortune!" said the notary eagerly. "But you, have you not spirits, youth, beauty and grace? You will have the bad bargain, mademoiselle, and you do not wish to make it—because—tell me truly, mademoiselle—because I am not agreeable to you—I can perfectly understand that."

The notary pronounced these last words with a sincere and sorrowful humility, which made a painful impression upon Jeanne. Whilst the illegal

attentions of the Baron de Blanchelande had found her haughty and immovable in her proud chastity, the true, loyal sentiments of M. Gravis touched her soul. It cost her a great deal to wound such a generous and devoted heart. But there are some occasions when all compromise is impossible. When the heart says no! the lips cannot say yes! There are some refusals that cost dear, but it would be dishonest not to make them.

The notary regarded Jeanne silently, with beseeching looks! But the eyes were distorted by the spectacles. Glasses are beautiful magnifiers, but they cloud all impressiveness.

"I feel for you," continued Jeanne, taking Gravis' hand, that she held for a moment in her own, "as much affection as esteem. I have more confidence in you than any one else in the world; all this is very true—and I am certain that you know this. But what shall I say? I am undoubtedly a strange, foolish creature—but all this does not seem to suffice for marriage. And then, you know, I am still very young."

"Yes, very young—for me!"

"For every one. I swear to you before God that there is no one at this time in the world I wish to marry."

"You are fortunate in being able to wait," said the notary, with the sadness of a man who has allowed himself to love too late in life.

The conversation, if carried on in this strain, would soon be equally embarrassing for both.

Gravis saw this, and had the good taste to desist from urging her, for he knew it would uselessly torment Jeanne, without in the least aiding his already desperate cause.

"I do not wish," said he, "to add importunity to my rash desires. I can only now pray you, mademoiselle, to forget an instance of foolish and wild pretensions."

"I will only remember it to recall at the same time the delicacy with which you have expressed sentiments that I am as proud of having inspired as unhappy that I cannot respond to as I should like."

"You do everything with a good grace," said the notary, "and constrain me to thank the one by whom I have just been refused. Consòle me at least by the assurance that I shall always be your friend."

"I am certain I shall never have a better one than yourself."

Gravis, more calm, resigned himself to the paternal role, for which he was quite suited, and resigning his rash pretensions, he inquired with a solicitude which was perfectly reasonable, what were the first steps Mlle. Derville intended taking, to what houses she thought of going, and at what hotel she desired to stay when she reached Paris. He offered to give her a letter to a friend of his, who kept a respectable establishment. "A rare thing in that abominable city," he added, with an ingenuous movement of fear. He gave her all sorts of good advice, and made her promise that she would apply to him if she should ever become in serious embarrassments.

Rose-Celeste, dressed for conquests, entered her father's study at the precise moment when this embarrassing conversation was ended. Jeanne was happy at her arrival, for it afforded the interruption she so eagerly desired and knew not how to accomplish.

The daughter of the notary, to use a vulgar saying, had all her sails set; her dove-colored dress, of shot silk, was surrounded with jewels, and she wore a flower garden on the top of her head. The heart of the poor substitute must certainly yield.

Mlle. Gravis remained immovable on the threshold of the study, looking suspiciously at the little group.

"Hold!" she said, to herself. "See how papa is coloring! Indeed, if this is not looked after this affected young lady will have him soon infatuated, and he shall not be stolen—at his age! if it can be prevented!"

After this slightly disrespectful reflection she addressed herself to Jeanne: "Why, mademoiselle, it is ten o'clock, and you are not yet dressed! The last bell will soon ring; we shall be late for the procession!"

"Do not wait for me, mademoiselle; I should be extremely sorry to deprive such a pious person as yourself of the slightest portion of the services. I will go to twelve o'clock mass, if your father will be kind enough to escort me!"

"Certainly, certainly! with much

pleasure!" said the notary, delighted with this proposition; for it would give him two hours longer to talk with Jeanne.

"Well, indeed! it seems they are happy enough to be left together!" thought Rose-Celeste. And as she was not much inclined to promote the happiness of others, she instantly decided to make the third party.

"Since this is so," said she, looking at her father, and speaking in the sharp positive tone which the poor notary was not in the habit of resisting, "I will also wait. The grand mass is only absolutely necessary every third Sunday, and I was there last week."

Without waiting for a reply, which could not, of course, be a refusal, Rose-Celeste took off her bonnet with great care, so as not to disturb the arrangement of flowers and ribbons, and seated herself firmly in the window recess, pretending to read the Notaries' Official Journal, perfectly satisfied with the game she believed she had played on her father and Mademoiselle Derville.

"What an agreeable step-daughter I should have had!" thought Jeanne, regarding her at this moment.

The presence of this dragon rendered impossible all intimate conversation. Jeanne lost nothing, however, by this arrangement; it was a relief to her not being obliged to listen to any more of M. Gravis' sad confidences. Instead of annoying her, as Rose-Celeste intended, she did her a service; but as she had not much desire to enjoy the conversation of the daughter and the father she asked Mlle. Gravis to excuse her, for she had several important letters to write, and making her best bow she withdrew to her own room.

"The impertinent creature!" murmured the daughter of the notary; "she does just as she pleases! I wish she was a hundred miles away! Happily, to-morrow is not far off!"

Jeanne started the next morning.

"Well," said she, as she got into the carriage, "I now commence the life of the Wandering Jew, rolling from city to city, without having, alas! the everlasting five cents in my pocket!"

CHAPTER III.

IT was barely two months since Mlle. Derville had left Saint Denis, and what stern experience she had gained in so short a time! What mournful thoughts filled her soul! What a sad future opened before her tearful eyes!

When, from the coach door, she saw the end of her journey, Paris, all clothed in the uncertain light of the dawn, outlining in vastness her enormous profile, she could not help trembling, as so many others before her have done, and as so many after her will still do, on perceiving the battle-ground where alone, without aid, almost without arms, she must fight the battle of life.

This was only a passing emotion, which all the strength of her nature rose to combat. This was not the moment for sentimental weakness it was the hour of contest and of action. Her good sense, showing her things in a practical light, made her understand them perfectly.

When she left the cars she drove to the hotel M. Gravis had indicated.

There she met with her first disappointment. The house the notary had known some years before simple in its arrangements and moderate in its prices, had undergone a complete and sorrowful transformation. It was now a grand hotel, with all the pretensions of one. It had also entirely changed hands, and Mlle. Derville did not find the respectable lady to whom she had been recommended by M. Gravis. But, since she was there, what had she better do? She did not know where else to go; so she stayed.

When the poor girl found herself all alone in this cold, gloomy room of a furnished hotel, abandoned by every one, entirely desolate, obliged to plan and work, when it is so sweet for a woman to rely upon another, she felt more bitterly than ever the sadness of her isolation. She felt overcome by an unconquerable feeling of timidity. She declared to herself that she would never have the courage to enter a house to seek for a situation. How should she address the occupants? What could she say? If she only had some letters of introduction; but nothing—absolutely nothing—it was too little!

And if they should unfortunately take her for what she was not! In the hotel even, there were people who looked at her in an unpleasant manner. To avoid these looks as much as possible she remained in her room, and had her meals served. This unwonted delicacy would doubtlessly increase her bill.

At last, the idea that she had so judiciously made at Avranches returned in full force—that no one would come to seek for her, and if she needed people's aid she must find them.

The commencement of everything is difficult, especially in those badly arranged walks of life which have no particular rule or established hierarchy, where they do not follow in arranged foot paths, but where each one starts out for himself and reaches the end only through his own exertions. To enter into these careers delicate natures have trials which amount almost to agony. However, necessity—the sovereign and tyrannical mistress of life—commands on some occasions so imperatively that there is nothing left but to obey. "It is necessary!" From this grand dictum there is no withdrawal.

Jeanne first thought of Saint Denis, the maternal asylum which had so carefully shielded her youth, and where she could obtain for life a modest but honorable existence, shaded from the changes and caprices of fortune. But she had so proudly left the house; she had thanked the superintendent with so much assurance; she had declared so firmly she wished to try the chances of life; she had announced, with such positive clearness, her determination to create a position for herself out of this grand establishment where she had passed her youth, that out of regard to herself and the opinion of others she felt bound not to return to Saint Denis. In this painful uncertainty she thought of the first person she had met on leaving school, into whose house she had been welcomed with such perfect grace and easy kindness.

She thought she had almost the right to regard this lady as a friend, and, in her present situation, a friend was a rare and precious article. She made a fresh and pretty toilet, for she already knew that precisely when we wish to gain something from our friends we must not excite their pity. She then took the cars to Maisons-Lafitte, and reached Mme. de l'Isle's before she had risen.

If it was already the hour for business, it was not the hour for fashionable visits. This Jeanne soon saw from little things which by a nature like hers could not pass unnoticed. The domestics of a great house, unconsciously perhaps, do not show the same respect to a lady who arrives at ten in the morning as they would to one who arrives at four in the afternoon.

Still, in the country, even Parisian country, there is always more hospitality than in the city. They showed Mlle. Derville into the parlor saloon; she saw at once that everything was disarranged. The chairs and sofas were out of place. Some benches, with gold fringe, arranged along the wall, clearly indicated that they had received the previous evening.

Jeanne remembered the evening she made her debut. Was it not here she had taken her first step in life; that first step which the song says we make without reflection? This first step, followed by so many others, had led through an endless path of flowers, to conduct her afterwards by an overwhelming disaster to the desolate region where she now was.

The waiting man left her alone a few moments, while he sought madame's maid.

Jeanne gave her name.

"Madame slept late this morning," replied the abigail, scrutinizing Jeanne from head to foot, "and I am ordered not to enter her room until she rings."

"Very well," said Jeanne, "I will wait."

"Perhaps mademoiselle will have to wait a long time."

"As long as necessary; but here is my card; give it to your mistress as soon as she awakes."

The maid left without another word.

In a few moments she returned with a little joyous, impertinent manner, which did not augur happily for the young lady. She still held the card which Jeanne had given her a few moments before.

"Fearing mademoiselle might be in a hurry," said she, pertly, "I have taken the liberty of entering madame's room,

and have given her mademoiselle's card. Madame is very sorry, but not having the pleasure of knowing mademoiselle, she is unable to receive her. If mademoiselle comes on business, she will please to write, and madame will send a reply."

Whilst listening to these little, dry, cutting sentences, almost insolent, and certainly impertinent, which she was far from expecting, Jeanne felt such a sudden and painful astonishment, that she could not immediately find words to answer.

"Mademoiselle de l'Isle does not know me? she said she did not know me!" murmured she. "Could Madame de Blanchelande have written? Have the rich and happy formed a league against a poor girl? Oh! the world—the world! She does not know me! But, after all, Madame de l'Isle owes me nothing. In addressing her I have perhaps done wrong. Still, she has always seemed so kind and affectionate."

She looked up, and saw the odious Abigail standing before her, watching with her wicked eyes. This sight recalled her from feelings to realities. She arose, as if she was deaf and dumb, and left the saloon. She met the master of the house in the vestibule as he was returning from a walk in the park, accompanied by his cousin, a young man who had danced with Jeanne. He instantly recognised the young lady, and made her a profound bow.

"Who are you saluting?" asked M. de l'Isle.

"A charming young girl."

"I am perfectly aware of that fact; but that does not tell me her name."

"Her name? I do not know. All I know is that you received her here the evening of the races."

"We received a great many."

"She was a friend of Mlle. Victorine de Blanchelande, and an old scholar of Saint Denis."

"But, then, what is she doing here, this morning?"

"That I know no more than yourself. All I can say is, that I am very sorry she is going away."

"Eh! zounds, who sent her away? Why is she going?"

"In your place, I would ask her."

"My faith! you are right," said M. de l'Isle, rushing off in pursuit of Jeanne.

He reached her as she was going out of the gate which separated the park from the enclosure around the house.

"A thousand pardons, mademoiselle, and a thousand regrets!" said he, taking off his hat with eager politeness. "I have just passed you, and I had the misfortune not to recognise you at first, although I now perfectly remember that we have had the happiness of receiving you."

Jeanne was leaving with despair in her heart, paleness on her cheeks, tears in her eyes. She stopped mechanically; troubled, confused, and much affected, she could not answer M. de l'Isle; but her unaffected, charmimg embarrassment spoke instead.

M. de l'Isle, who was not a wicked man, felt a sincere, benevolent feeling of interest and compassion, for he understood some misfortune existed under the timid reserve of this beautiful person.

"Come to the aid of my poor memory, and deign to inform me to whom I have the honor of speaking."

"My name will convey no information!" replied Jeanne, sadly; "they have just informed me it was unknown to Mme. de l'Isle."

"Some mistake, I am certain, for which my wife and myself are not responsible."

"I am Mlle. Derville."

"Oh! Mlle. Derville! A scholar of Saint Denis; a friend of Mlle. de Blanchelande, is it not? We have so often talked about you, mademoiselle, and whatever the motive may be that has led you to our house, we are perfectly delighted—Mme. de l'Isle and myself—with the happy meeting it has procured."

Whilst speaking, he offered his arm to Jeanne, to lead her back to the house. What was simply a mark of politeness, appeared to Jeanne a token of sympathy, for which she was grateful. Many deceptions are necessary to the young, to prevent them from deluding themselves and believing what they desire.

"Thanks, sir, for your kind words; you encourage me to tell you all. I confess I feel a great necessity to see Mme. de

l'Isle, and at the risk of importuning her so early in the morning, I have sent in my card. They informed me that I was unknown. I then left."

All this was said with perfect simplicity, but with a moving, sorrowful accent, which showed the secret wound of the soul.

M. de l'Isle saw all this.

"There is some misunderstanding, which will soon be cleared up. I will offer you, in advance, all the excuses of my wife, who will soon express her regrets. I can answer for her that she is not capable of such a thing."

They entered.

Mlle. Derville and her former partner renewed their acquaintance. M. de l'Isle left them chatting, and went to his wife's chamber. He soon returned with an air of triumph.

"I knew perfectly well," said he, "that we were the victims of a mistake. Madame de l'Isle, half asleep, did not understand your name—she recalls it now, perfectly. It would have been hard to console her if she had not seen you. They will lead you to her boudoir."

The abigail, formerly so impertinent, appeared, and with a sheepish manner and an obsequious voice, said:

"Madame is waiting for mademoiselle; if mademoiselle will be kind enough to follow me."

She showed Jeanne into a dressing-room, which Mme. de l'Isle laughingly designated as her working-room, and which was as coquettish and elegant as the boudoir of a "petite-maitresse."

Notwithstanding she was thirty, Mme. de l'Isle wore her own hair, curled, and did not use powder or rouge, just as the good God had been pleased to make her.

She was still beautiful, which, perhaps, aided her in being kind. Contented with herself, she was pleased with others, and wished to please all around her. She gave Jeanne a charming welcome, was most happy to meet her again, and hoped she would see her at all the balls and parties she intended giving next winter. When she had finished, in a soft tone, all her pretty speeches, which Jeanne took care not to interrupt:

"Now tell me why you have come to see me, this morning, my dear little one—and all alone—this is singular. Where is your charming friend?"

"The ladies Blanchelande are at present in Italy. But life which is only full of pleasure for them, is only full of duties for me. I have left them"—

Mme. de l'Isle gave a start of surprise, and her manner became distant.

We should state that looking upon Jeanne's uncertain position, the woman of the world, only slightly acquainted with the young girl, showed at first a reserve, unmingled, however, with hostility or spite.

Jeanne perceived this, although Mme. de l'Isle, after her first involuntary movement, inquired kindly into her plans, and showed her every encouragement. Jeanne told her all she could without betraying the sad secret of her heart.

"I am poor, madame," added she, as she finished her painful story. "I have seen my hopes fade day by day, and am no longer the one you used to know. I am penniless, endowed, they tell me, with much intelligence, passably well informed, and I must confess that I am obliged to support myself by what I have learned."

This revelation singularly annoyed Mme. de l'Isle. She was not an ill-natured woman; on the contrary rather kind-hearted. But this very ordinary sort of goodness is not very laudable, for it rarely extends into good actions. She had a weakness not unusual—she loved to see people happy—she must always be surrounded with gaiety and parties. Her house was the rendezvous of youth and fortune. She did all in her power to render life a never-ending fête. The warmth of her reception was always in proportion to the degree of splendor or éclat one could give to her receptions. Her existence commenced only at ten in the evening! Gas-lights seemed her natural element—her true sun was a chandelier!

On seeing enter her saloon, under the chaperonage of Mme. de Blanchelande, this Mme. Derville, whose name sounded well, and who was full of grace and the brightness of youth, she had hoped to find in her a valuable recruit. This was the secret of the enthusiasm she had displayed to the pupil of Saint Denis. The inexperience of the young

girl made her an easy captive. And what young girl in her place would not have yielded?

But now when Jeanne laid before her the most terrible of all wants—that of fortune, which caused with it the loss of all the joys and elegancies of this life, which was absolutely the life of Mme. de l'Isle, the face of things was much altered. She had too much tact to allow these impressions to be seen. Such a change could not take place to-day nor to-morrow—it must be gradual. But who better than a woman understands this admirable science of dissimulation, and thus giving a different coloring to their true thoughts? One can now have a proof.

"Truly all this is very sad, my dear child," said she, after listening to Jeanne with great attention, "and I really do not know what to advise under such serious circumstances."

"The first thing I have imposed upon myself," said Jeanne, "is to bid farewell to all the fascinating dreams usually indulged in by young girls of my age. This I have done. When the necessity of a thing is presented, my part is taken, and I decide without fear or murmur. I should much prefer a thousand pounds income to working for my living, but labor is the fate of all who are not the favorites of fortune and of destiny. I am aware of this, and I submit—I only ask God one thing, that he may always give me the work I need."

Jeanne's noble nature rose above her trials; and there was such strength in her words, that Mme. de l'Isle was amazed. Her friends were not formed on this model, they were of an entirely different type. She was seized with a fit of enthusiasm for Mlle. Derville—it was a most complete sudden revival of her interest in the young girl. Mme. de l'Isle was perfectly sincere at this moment; she found herself called to play a role in her circle, which she would enjoy so well.

What pretty phrases she could use on the subject of the labor, virtue, and misfortunes of poor young girls!

Jeanne especially; so pretty — the pupil of Saint Denis—the daughter of a colonel who married for love, and died without fortune! Hers was a case of great interest—the client was worthy of the advocate. Constance (this was Mme. de l'Isle's name) felt like thanking Jeanne for the good she would enable her to accomplish. Behold, what it is to have a beautiful soul!

"My dear child," said she to Mlle. Derville, taking both her hands, "these are noble words, and I honor you for such thoughts. I pity with all my heart, those who do not understand your dignified conduct and your noble resolutions. I regard it as my duty, in such circumstances, to come to your aid; I wish to see you quickly gain the position you so well deserve."

Unfortunate people are always sensitive, they feel grateful for the slightest interest. Jeanne warmly thanked Mme. de l'Isle.

"I shall keep you here all day; you have nothing to do in Paris—Paris now is unendurable and deserted. Besides, we must arrange our plans. You will agree to this, I hope."

"I place myself in your hands," said the young girl, pressing the hand Mme. de l'Isle extended.

Her beautiful protectress rang the bell; the maid appeared.

"Say that mademoiselle will breakfast here, and do you return to dress me." Then turning to Jeanne: "You, my dear beauty, will please go into my boudoir; you will find some books—reviews, magazines—and then I will not be long, I hope."

Jeanne went into the boudoir, and turned the leaves of an album without noticing its contents. She forgot the disappointments of her first hopes, and gave herself up to a confidence, which nothing can crush in the soul of the young.

Disappointments wound, but they never kill. Mme. de l'Isle hastened through her toilet, and appeared in a morning "negligee," which her admirers called adorable. The two ladies went down into the garden, which was as large as a park, gracefully, lightly, joyously, like two sisters. Constance longed to enter into her role—she was as impatient as a pupil of the Conservatory, who feels she has talent, and to whom they have promised a debut in the French opera. She wished she was already on the boards!

In a few words, Mme. de l'Isle ex-

plained the matter to her husband and cousin. They could only reproach her with too much emphasis, and for not sparing Jeanne's blushes, who dared not interrupt, but who suffered at hearing this eulogium in her presence.

M. de l'Isle took the thing to heart as well as his wife, and promised his services. The cousin uttered some sentimental, well turned sentences, that he thought very appropriate. Jeanne could understand them if she pleased, but Blanchelande and Maxence de Bois-Robert was still too near her heart; besides, she was surrounded by the cares of the future, and her soul was too heavy for any lighter thoughts.

Constance invited her to stay at the villa. Where could she be better off? But experience had taught the young girl, and she never again desired to share the hospitalities of the rich. She thanked her warmly, but wished to wait at the hotel until the kind promises of her new protectress should be carried out.

It was certainly the most dignified, but perhaps the less politic course.

Mme. de l'Isle was one of those, to whom the old proverb of "out of sight out of mind" so truly applies. If Jeanne had remained near her, being thus a living reminder of her promise, she would have taken an active part on her behalf. Jeanne did not dream of this. It is one's duty, however, to dream of everything.

Mlle. Derville reached home, after a pleasant journey, less sad than when she left. Seeing a glimmer of hope in the horizon of her life. She said to herself, that with the best will in the world, Mme. de l'Isle could not find a suitable position for her to-day or to-morrow. She subdued her impatience, and taught herself to wait.

CHAPTER IV.

WAITING, however, seemed interminable. Not knowing what to do, too timid to go out alone; not daring to form acquaintances in the hotel that might prove dangerous; she remained alone in the privacy of her own room. Since she had left school, this was the first time she had been left entirely alone. Solitude hung heavily on her. The evenings were supremely intolerable; and the night, in which she did not sleep, dragged with desperate slowness. She followed the example of all idlers, and sent to the circulating library for a novel.

It was the first one she had ever read, and she was charmed.

In all ages, and to all temperaments, the works of the imagination exercise a powerful influence. On a young, ardent, impressionable mind like Jeanne Derville's, their influence is still greater. The romance throws her into an entirely new world of passion, and of dreams which is better than the other world; one where poetry takes the trouble to arrange life, and reality comes afterwards and changes all. Predisposed to romantic impressions by her first unfortunate love, which still governed the poor creature, she liked, especially, to cherish all the chimeras of true love, and to renew the proud, heroic, ardent, disinterested feelings, which so happily replace that which we have, with that we wish to have.

Romance is not demoralizing, as a multitude of honest men would make us believe, and who fight against it, because they have not studied it.

Its danger is not in its attacks on virtue, for in these days it respects virtue. But the peril is as great, though it comes from a higher source. It is in this thirst for the ideal, that it kindles in our natures, which nothing after can satisfy or destroy.

In a day and a night, Jeanne devoured six volumes, with feverish eagerness. The librarian, who had the strong instinct of one who lives on the passions of others, understood at once that his new patron would prove a good customer. So, when she returned the book, he himself chose her another, which she carried home, and soon became equally absorbed in.

This life lasted for eight days, and they passed like a dream.

Her eyes became red, and her cheeks pale, but she experienced an intense sensation of an unknown life—one which fairly carried her away. It was like the opening of womanhood in a young girl. In this engrossing chain of thoughts, she partially forgot Blan-

chelande, the Maisons-Lafitte somewhat, and Avranches entirely—This ungrateful lady fair!

Alongside of these heroes of romance, so constant in their tenderness, so full of their love, so firm in the midst of their thousand trials, so devoted in their misfortunes, Maxence appeared very tame, and little worthy of this affection, approaching worship, that her young soul had so hastily dedicated to him! She was forced to acknowledge to herself, that she was worthy something better than he was; and what she deserved, life might, perhaps, one day give her On each page of these fascinating books did she not see young girls without fortune, (like herself, placed like her to experience a thousand trials), end always by meeting the man of their dreams and of their choice, and by attaining the ideal end of all young ladies' desires—a marriage for love—which is happiness in duty.

One of those paltry realities from which poor Jeanne was so glad to escape, called her suddenly from heaven to earth.

The mistress of the hotel, though much edified by the appearance, manners, and quietness of her beautiful boarder, sent her, nevertheless, at the end of the week, her little account; which, composed of innumerable small details, formed a frightful total.

This miserable question of accounts, though overlooked by the novelists, on whose works Jeanne had feasted, were quite as embarrassing to settle.

This is what rendered Rabelais's famous quarter of an hour so painful.

"Well, indeed!" said Mlle. Derville, after adding up the too exact column, "at the rate I am going, Iwould find myself on a bed of straw in a month. This little room costs the price of a house in the provinces—I must act immediately. And this Mme. de l'Isle has forgotten me, after all her promises and protestations. Oh, these worldly people! they are all alike! Happily, Maisons-Lafitte is not two hundred miles away from Paris."

She decided to visit the villa of the beautiful Constance the next day, only she did not wish to arrive at the beggars' hour, as she had formerly done, but at the visiting hour of friends, acquaintances, and equals. Experience must teach something.

Though the coquettish habitation was not far from the station, Jeanne hired a carriage, so as not to be seen arriving on foot; if by chance there should be visitors. She now knew that the best way to obtain anything from people, is to seem not to need it.

She rang the bell with an assurance that astonished herself, and made her smile at her emotions on her previous visit. A little thing suffices to influence our moral dispositions, and to change them entirely. If any one had asked Jeanne the reason of these new feelings, she could not have answered the question. She felt them—that was all.

Usually, at the first sound of the bell, a movement was to be seen inside, the vestibule door would open, a mutinous head of some woman would appear at a window, two footmen would be seen on the stone steps, while the gatekeeper, leaving a rustic lodge, built like a hut, and half hidden by glycerine and vines,would run with the keys in his hand.

This time, there was nothing of all that. Not a window opened—not a door creaked—no person appeared. It might have been called the castle of the Sleeping Beauty of the woods.

"Are they all dead?" asked Mlle. Derville with a feeling of uneasiness. "What does this mean?" She rang a second time and much louder.

The door-keeper, who united with his humble employment that of "the intendant of gardens," as the solemn Boileau calls it, came with slow steps from the depths of his domain, and without troubling himself to open the door asked Jeanne through the grating, how he could serve her.

"I wish to see madame?"

"She is not here."

"Will she return soon?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"She is not then at home."

"No."

"And monsieur?"

"Monsieur is also away. I am the only person in the villa."

"Where have they gone?"

"To the South, to pay a visit to madame's mother."

"Do they expect to stay away a long time?"

"For the rest of the season. They only started yesterday morning."

Jeanne got into her carriage.

"To the depot," said she, to the coachman; and whilst shutting the carriage-door, she murmured, "Fate is against me!"

She regained the station with a sad heart. She who had left twenty minutes before, in such a contented, joyous frame of mind.

She had calculated so surely on the good offices of Constance, and relied on her more than she had ever done on any one, that her abrupt departure struck her a sudden blow more cruel than all the rest.

"To go away, without leaving one word for me, is a mark of neglect that I did not deserve. All the same—even the best. They wish me to feel the distance between us. It would have been very easy before leaving to have done what I asked. To write a few lines, to speak a good word to the mother of some young lady of fortune—and she has not thought of it. She has thought only of her hats and dresses, but not at all of me. Well, then, wherein have I sinned against God, that I should be so unfortunate? Yet they say that he is the Father of all."

Mlle. Derville returned home unhappy, but far from being discouraged. She felt the contest with fate become more and more difficult; but she summoned all her strength and energy to her aid at this critical moment, One thing she saw perfectly, that she could not afford to wait any longer. Now was the time to display all her forces.

It was the time to act. To act—how many difficulties lie under that little word!

CHAPTER V.

DO you know anything harder for a young, honest, modest, well-born girl, than the necessity of introducing herself from house to house, inquiring of people, "Do you by any chance need a governess, a teacher, a young lady as a companion?"

The thought of Gravis came back to her mind. She remembered his offer of marriage, which had made her smile, and it seemed as if an insidious voice whispered in her ear, "That would have been bread and a shelter."

"Well, no," said she, after half a second's reflection; "everything, everything, rather than that!"

She rang for the chambermaid who waited on her, and sent her to the library, but not this time for one of the romances that had made her time fly away. No, the book she sent for was marked with a most prosaic title of modern life; of Parisian life. It was simply the dictionary of twenty-five thousand addresses—the Directory!

Jeanne turned it with a feverish hand, and read the names of all the schoolmistresses in Paris.

Armed with her diploma, she commenced next morning her round of embarrassing visits. Every one received her politely, but coldly; and everywhere, under one pretext or another, she saw herself condemned.

"Quite too young!" "Already too old!" Also, whilst rendering justice to the excellent house where she had been educated, they pretended it was behind the times in the education of youth. They feared these early impressions would keep with her, and that she could not conform to the latest ideas. With some she would have suited perfectly, but all the places were engaged. Others required that all their teachers should be Protestants.

All found some pretext against her, and she suited none. Each new refusal sunk into her heart like a thorn, but she was resolute in carrying out her sad exploration. However rude the voyage may be, it is always the first step that costs the most.

She had nearly finished her list when the carriage stopped at a door, on which she read, in letters, at least half a foot long, this inscription, "Boarding School for Young Ladies."

Jeanne entered a house of modest appearance, which had none of the luxury, elegance, or comfort of those she had visited before. Nothing of the imposing dignity to which Saint Denis had accustomed her young pupil. Our heroine, still young enough to feel vividly the impressions of material things, experienced an indefinable, but real uneasiness.

A doorkeeper introduced her into the little parlor, whose paper had not been

changed for half a century, and whose furniture belonged to the different epochs of French industry. Mlle. Derville examined all this in five minutes, when she saw before her the majestic person of Mme Ernestine de Sainte Colombe. She was the head of the school. Mme. de Sainte Colombe had been beautiful; she had not forgotten this, and others could still see traces of it; but she had unfortunately an embonpoint as precocious as disagreeable, which spoilt the harmony of her formerly straight and perfect figure. So much for her physique.

For her intellectual character all we can say now is, that Mme. de Sainte Colombe was a pretentious "blue stocking." She wrote for some small magazines, and had, at this time, only one idea: it was to obtain a competent person to superintend her scholars so that she could devote herself entirely to what she called her more important works.

Perhaps Jeanne's appearance pleased her—or she might have been dazzled by the title of Scholar of Saint Denis—or perhaps she thought her a yielding person, who would carry out her wishes. At any rate, she accepted her services at once.

Situated in a street the least grand of the neighborhood of the pretentious and bourgeoise church—like the epoch it was built in—that of Notre Dame de Lorette, the school of Mme. de Sainte Colombe nourished the minds and souls and the bodies of forty young girls, who belonged to the tradespeople of that quarter. The charges were moderate—this charmed the parents—but as it always is with this mistaken economy, they had little for their money.

"We live here like one family," said the directress to the new mistress, showing the visitor the house. "I have daily professors—this young lady whom you see in the garden, is from Ireland—she teaches English. I have taught the higher branches—you will take my place—It is no sinecure, but you seem industrious, and God has not put us into this world to do nothing. We women—we all have our mission here below—mine is to write!" said she with emphasis.

Jeanne bowed her head, without replying.

"I lodge, wash, feed, and give lights," continued Mme. de Sainte Colombe, "and I give 400 francs to the Irish girl—but the Irish girl is not a scholar of Saint Denis, as you are. I know all that must be paid for—and especially these splendid diplomas! I will give you, then, six hundred francs—as an exception. Will this suit?"

"Very well," said Jeanne, who had not the means to refuse.

For a young girl who in a week would have had no place to lay her head, six hundred francs, lodging and food was an unhoped-for good. It was an unexpected stroke of fortune. Jeanne thought she had no right to refuse, and accepted the situation, perhaps rather hastily, and without inquiring enough about the school.

"When shall I come?" asked she, with an eagerness which gave a high idea of her zeal.

"When you please—as soon as possible—to-morrow morning—or, better still, this evening? I am finishing an important article for a review—and I have little time to myself. You will teach the first class to-morrow, at ten o'clock."

CHAPTER VI.

JEANNE left Mme. de Sainte Colombe, to arrange her affairs, which would not take long. She did everything in a joyous haste! Had she not, at last, gained the height of her desires: work—the means of obtaining her livelihood—the ability to eat bread that she owed only to herself?

It was, undoubtedly, humble, but still, it was a situation! and after so many fruitless efforts, and all kinds of disappointments, she could not be hard to please.

An hour later, all was arranged at the hotel, and the same caraiage she had employed in the morning took her humble baggage to the institution of Mme. de Sainte Colombe.

The room of a young teacher of a fourth-class school is not usually very luxurious. Jeanne's was furnished in the scantiest manner. It was only a garret, just under the roof, with but strictly indispensable furniture. Jeanne opened a window, to air the place shut

up for so long a time, and saw a horizon of stove-funnels, hideously ugly, and bodies of monumental-looking chimneys. She missed the views at Blanchelande, where the eye reposed so gracefully on the waving summits of green forests, and the majestic figure of Mount Saint Michael, beneath which one could see the infinite sand and boundless ocean, and the garden of the Rosery.

"Pshaw!" said she; "I only come here to sleep, and one can dream without a landscape before them."

Jeanne was somewhat of a philosopher, which was well—she tried to make the best of everything. Besides, no matter how miserable this poor little room might be, it was the first home of her own she had ever known; and this made it valuable to a proud and even slightly haughty spirit, who had suffered in feeling herself always in the houses of others. She took possession with a sincere feeling of independence. She was, perhaps, a near neighbor of the other teacher. But in Paris, space is very precious; besides, she could always close the door.

Jeanne slept sweetly and peacefully on her hard bed.

The next morning, Mme. de Sainte Colombe, who desired to do everything in the best manner, presented the new mistress to her class.

We have already stated this establishment was not an aristocratic institution. It was filled with the children of trades-people, who are not yet convinced, that to save on the education of their children, is more ruinous than prodigality. The number was not large enough to be divided into classes, therefore, all the scholars, no matter how old, or how advanced, took their lessons in common, which made the teacher's duties very arduous—obliged to interest the elder, whilst making the youngest understand. What madame called her first class, was a mere figure of speech, in which she often indulged. The scholars were ill-bred and stupid. Jeanne felt she ought to have remained at St. Denis if she wished to teach, where everything was well arranged, and teaching a pleasure. Here it was simply a task. But she resolved not to be discouraged, and increased her energy and zeal.

"You are over good," said the young Irish teacher, her companion in work and misery. "You are really over good, to take so much trouble for these young monkeys. Look at me, and follow my example. It will be all the same at the end of the year. I give them a lesson every day, two hours long, with my watch in my hand. I never cheat them of one minute. I thus gain my soup and beef. Let those heed who will. My part is done. Each one for herself."

As Alice O'Farrell, for that was the young teacher's name, uttered these words, she laughed long and bitterly, showing Jeanne her little white teeth, which were sharp and pointed like a cat's.

Jeanne examined her more attentively than she had ever done. The under-teacher of Mme. de Sainte Colombe was a perfect type of these beautiful daughters of Erin, whom the novelist dreams of, and the traveller sees along the Giant's Causeway, in the Lakes of Killarney, or the River Shannon, and in the streets of Dublin, of Cork, and of Galway. With tall, slim, elegant, noble figures, charming expression, curled wavy hair around the temples, intellectual brows, bright eyes, and notwithstanding so many sorrows and deaths, a smile on the arch lip, with open nostrils, breathing frankness, courage, and energy. Alice was all this. Her face paled by the contest of life; her little mouth seeming to be made for silence rather than speech; her little bright almond shape eyes, all showed to the attentive observer a reserved self-possessed woman, who had suffered much, and who had been soured by her trials. Unhappiness affects people very differently. Some natures it softens, others it turns into stone.

"Perhaps with a little patience," said Jeanne, "we may make something of these children."

"Try! mademoiselle, if you have good seed to sow, I will not hinder you."

"I shall certainly try, for it is our duty to do all we can for them, as we would have wished others to do for us."

"As if these common children would appreciate all the trouble you take! Do not be afraid, they will receive the worth of their money."

"Oh! mademoiselle! how can you speak so? You are so naughty!"

"I was not always so. My life has altered me. Wait, before you judge.

"When you have been hardened as long as I, you will become a machine. As for Mme. de Sainte Colombe, who is neither Madame, Sainte, nor Colombe, and whose name would belong as well to your old shoe, you will learn many beautiful things about her."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh! nothing—you have eyes—you can see, I suppose."

"It seems as if they were useless to me, for I confess I have seen nothing."

"Indeed! but where, if you please, did you inquire about the character of this establishment?"

"Where did you?"

"Oh, as for me, I made no inquiries. What could I do? I landed here from England without one cent. I had been through many troubles—I needed bread. But you who seem well off—for you are well dressed—how came you to do so?"

"It is not necessary to come from England, mademoiselle, to be sometimes very much embarrassed."

"Oh, then, I understand; but just think there is only one house in all Paris like this, and we are here—here both of us."

Alice's allusions excited Jeanne's curiosity, and she thought she must be in the plot of some novel; but she would ask no questions. Mlle. Derville was willing to receive confidences, but she would never draw people out. Alice visited her, however, every evening, and chatted away while she drank her tea which she had obtained from the confectioner. It was not exactly the company she would have chosen, but it was the best she could get in the establishment of Mme. Ernestine de Sainte Colombe. Alice amused her, and carried her out of herself by her lively sallies of fun. She became pale and thin in this atmosphere of captivity—allowed only every other Sunday to herself, and Jeanne had one Sunday—Alice the other. If they only could have gone out together. For where could she go alone? Nowhere. So she nearly always spent her Sundays at home, reading a little and dreaming a great deal. These days were not happy, and she preferred the monotonous routine of the week.

We have only mentioned the feminine portions of this establishment, but there were also some wolves in this sheep-fold. These wolves were the masters, the professors of music and drawing. The pianist stood alone. He was a Southerner with sparkling black eyes, fine profile, thin as a rail, yellow as a guinea, with long black hair; and who, notwithstanding the absurdity of his appearance, had been very successful with women, especially the under-teachers in the schools where he was admitted; he was particularly dangerous for this class of females. Truth obliges us to acknowledge that the young Irish girl had yielded to the magnetic charm of his eye! The professor of drawing seemed to honor only Mme. de Sainte Colombe with his especial attention. He might be called a pretty old bachelor, with rather too much color, and rather high shoulders. He was a great favorite with Mme. de Sainte Colombe—he made the good and bad weather of the house. Jeanne could not help suspecting evil; and she suffered with the discovery.

But as she was not in a position to examine too closely, she dismissed her painful suspicions and devoted herself to her own duties, without interfering with others.

CHAPTER VII.

BUT circumstances stronger than herself, would not permit her to enjoy the fruits of such wise, prudent conduct. Rollina, this was the name of this Lovelace of the piano, not satisfied with one conquest, unable to resist Jeanne's charms, perhaps rather tired of Miss O'Farrell's sentimental importunities, or he might have been a partisan butterfly of Fourier's; at any rate, it pleased him to pass one evening in France, and the next in Ireland. To-day with Alice, to-morrow with Jeanne. He did not fail to employ his fine eyes on the colonel's daughter. His attentions, quiet enough at first, became so warm it was necessary to repress them. Jeanne was not in the slightest danger from such fascinations, they rather disgusted her; and she treated them with perfect disdain—she saw that the young Irish girl would be

worried by these attentions, that only annoyed her—for Alice loved him truly—and one knows that *real true love is often jealous.* She thought her idol so perfect, that every woman who saw him must adore him, and she did not credit Jeanne's disinterestedness.

Jeanne, finding her efforts unavailing, and that Alice still regarded her with suspicion, preserved a cold, haughty silence towards her. She regretted this, as it added to her troubles, and cut off the pleasant chats and comfort they had found in each other's society.

Instead of being a mutual aid and strength to each other as heretofore, the two girls displayed that silent hostility which makes the society of one we have formerly enjoyed so disagreeable. And they were not only obliged to meet, but to be thrown into irritating relationships every moment. They both felt that if they gave up their situations, they would have no place to shelter themselves—they were in a strait where they could not change. Bad as it was, it had been hard to find; indeed, now that all the schools had commenced, almost impossible.

Mme. de l'Isle was still away, as she had not heard from her; and at any rate, her pride would not permit her to seek her again. Her first step had already cost too much, and she could not humble herself again to those who had formerly met her as an equal.

Jeanne's eyes once opened did not shut—ignorant of vice and hating it by instinct, she was obliged to assist at it each day, and authorize it in some way by her presence. An honest, pure soul could not experience a harder trial—and for Jeanne to endure it for so long, showed the force of necessity.

Hopeless of finding another asylum, she took refuge in her own conscience, and by her strict performance of duty, put those in the wrong, who judging only by appearances, might form an unfavorable opinion of her—they should be the guilty ones, not she—the course she took was the only one in her power, but her soul revolted proudly from it. Young souls need to feel themselves surrounded by propriety and respect, and they suffer in being deprived of the most precious of all these gifts.

But however painful her determination, Jeanne kept on till the end; the end meaning the last day of the year—then she would have accomplished her hard task, and have marched nobly through her laborious career—after this she could show herself with dignity to her friends—and to her enemies, if she had them—she would have lived by her own work, the most honorable way in the world. She would also have a little sum left, fruit of her wisdom and economy, for she did not spend one cent; thus all her little wealth accumulated from month to month in Madame de Sainte Colombe's hands.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN unexpected catastrophe upset once more "Perette's pot of milk." Madame de Sainte Colombe, although, as she asserted, for many years a widow, found herself (without being able to give an entirely satisfactory moral explanation) in a situation that only one man in the world had the right to find "interesting," although this is the term by which it is usually characterized.

Whenever it is possible we all unite in dooming our rivals to the sternest fate. Human selfishness displays itself there in its most savage forms—I say, frankly, with its greatest ferocity. We often use the expression "Battle of Life," the title of Charles Dickens' strange romance, where is described most truly the social contest until the hour of death, which becomes more and more one of the essential conditions of mortal existence. To conquer or to die! This old melodramatic formula is, to-day, only an exact geometrical statement.

They march with crowded ranks, shoulder to shoulder, advanced bayonets. Evil to those who fall! they are trodden under foot! To be wounded is death. There is no room for pity in the thundering rapidity of action—the living walls of the phalanx who fight close up to the breaches, and to gain the goal of victory rush over the dead bodies of their companions in arms, who will never rise again.

Mme. de Sainte Colombe's misfortune was received with malicious hilarity by all it could benefit. They spread it at first by little wicked insinuations, which

grew into threatening rumors; then, when the event was more known through the quarter, a regular denunciation was made to the administrative authorities and the clergy. It raised the most powerful and dangerous influences against the directress, for they were somehow obliged to dismiss her. A severe example must be made of her.

Madame de Sainte Colomba soon discovered all this, and determined on instant flight.

She left the very day that the authorities would have forced her to leave. But as she knew that the drawing-master, the author of all her woes, had less fortune than love, she considered it was absolutely necessary to save all the cash.

She saved it!

She carried off all that she could, leaving her debts as an inheritance to her creditors.

Jeanne suffered the most, and complained the least—for the mistress, in her flight, had carried off all the savings of the young girl. There was no one to help her; and as she did not wish to be mixed up in these affairs, she remained quiet. The girls were all removed by their indignant relations. Some declared their daughters' education finished; the rest were divided among the different schools of the quarter. It is an eternal fated law of life—the happiness of some is always made out of the misfortunes of others!

"Ah! my Rollina, I belong now entirely to you," exclaimed the impulsive Alice, when she first heard of their patroness's discomfiture.

But the pianist did not seem overjoyed at this declaration, for he received the happy news of the poor girl very coldly. His reply fell like cold water on the warmth of the Irish girl.

"Liberty is often fatal to love," said he, "and if women knew their true interests they would be far from desiring it. One loves and desires what is hard to obtain; one must not meet too easily, if one wishes to meet always with pleasure. This is sad, but true. Look what happens in marriage—how often it fails to render people happy. The best assorted couples generally end by getting tired of each other. Besides, for you and me, little one! work is a necessity, not a luxury; and if we were together we would not work much, we would pass our time in making love. I know, for my part, I could do nothing else."

"Oh, if what you said was only true!" said the young Irish girl, joining her hands with a passionate movement, "I would be too happy—and would consent to all."

"Consent then," said Rollina, smoothing with his hand the waving hair of the young girl.

Alice knew well the cold energy and determined will which Rollina possessed, but her secret desire was to live henceforward near the man to whom she had given her life.

But he, who had for some time fancied another, did not care to accept the dangerous sacrifice. He told her they must both take care of their names, and preserve the respect of the world, and it was only the rich who had the right to compromise themselves. He ended by placing her in a strict school where he did not give lessons, which disembarrassed him of her almost entirely.

The pianist had seen for a long time that he had no chance with Jeanne, so he had ceased to think of her; waiting, perhaps, for better times to realize his first hopes.

Alice had returned to her affection for Jeanne.

"I have not always been good to you," she said, when saying good-bye to Jeanne; "will you forgive me? I was very unhappy."

"I saw that," replied Jeanne, pressing her hand. "We will forget all now, and if we never meet again—may we think kindly of each other."

"Oh! you are so much better than I am!" said Miss O'Farrell, throwing herself on her neck.

"No, dear little friend, I am not better than you, but I have had more experience. I have already suffered so much, and I do not wish to cause suffering to others."

"Oh! if it had not been for M. Rollina I should never have given you trouble."

"Be satisfied, dear Alice, M. Rollina can never be anything to me, and I will not dispute him with you—but, my poor little one!"—

"Well! what? Make haste! What do you wish to say?"

"Alas! do not rely too much on men—the best are not worth a great deal—and I do not know if M. Rollina is one of the best."

"I love him!"

"Then, dear! if you will be unhappy, try and be as little so as possible."

Alice went to the place Rollina had obtained for her the same day, and Jeanne was left in that precarious, uncertain condition which seemed to be her fate. This new trial seemed more painful than the others. When misfortune redoubles its blow, it ends by conquering the most energetic natures. They resist at first, then they succumb—it is the law of nature.

CHAPTER IX.

JEANNE felt more timid than ever when she thought of the disgrace which surrounded the school. She thought the shame of the directress might reflect on the teachers. Where could she now go? What recommendations could she offer? To be known thus was a hundred times worse than not to be known at all.

The poor child did not know what to do. She remembered that the young Irish girl had told her of a young friend who gave private lessons. She was pleased with the idea of the perfect liberty of this life and its independence. Alice had said that they paid her friend sometimes ten francs a lesson, by the hour. Jeanne calculated that by working five or six hours each day she would make a little fortune in a few years. How she would work! With what ardor she would search for scholars! With what zeal she would give her lessons! How economically she would live! And some day Maxence should return! For Maxence was at the bottom of all her thoughts. With what deep and noble pride she would say to him, "Whilst you have seemed to forget me, I have worked! Whilst you have lived in happiness, I have fought hard to keep myself for you! God knows the cost of the sacrifices. But in the depths of my sorrow I was happy in thinking that some day, perhaps, you would know how willingly I exerted myself!"

And if Maxence did not return? Alas! after this long and cruel silence—when he knew she was exposed to so many difficulties, to so much sorrow, was she not right to fear the worst? Well, if he did not return life would be without charms, without object, without aim; and then there would be only one thing for her to do—to return to the Rosery, to live there a little while with Jacqueline in sorrow, silence, and regret.

She then decided: the scholar of Saint Denis would give private lessons. Mlle. Derville knew that to teach accomplishments paid much better than useful knowledge. She sang well; she played remarkably well; she required very little study to leave the common crowd of amateurs and join the rank of artists.

All these projects so skilfully executed seemed to renew Jeanne's energy and courage. She did not know where else to go, so she went to her old hotel. They found her much changed—her eyes seemed larger, and her cheeks pale and thin. They gave her the same little room, rather near heaven, and hoped she would remain as long as it suited her. But Jeanne always appreciated a first lesson. She now knew, by experience, what hotel life costs. So she determined to furnish a room for housekeeping. She started out at once to find one. It is a troublesome operation, especially for a lone woman, as she would soon discover.

CHAPTER X.

NOTWITHSTANDING the splendours of the new Paris, or perhaps on account of them, the lodging question becomes each day more perplexing for little purses. These poor little purses are the most unfortunate of all. First because they are little, which is an unpardonable error in a purse; then because they were not thought of, when these new houses were built. Architects and proprietors treat us like millionaires, although we are not. It is a heightened compliment, but it costs us very dear. Statistics show us that it is much easier to obtain an apartment for ten thousand francs than for two thousand. How much harder is it then when one has still less means? It is simply impossible. After ascending every staircase in the

Jung-Frau, Jeanne at last discovered in the street de Clichy, rather nearer heaven than earth, under the roof and on a level with all the chimneys, two little humble rooms, one whitewashed, the other papered with a Persian paper at fifteen cents each; they were formerly occupied by a young flower girl, who had plenty of light for her delicate work.

She was still there when the solemn porter showed Jeanne the rooms. The porter rejoiced in the poetic name of Gabriel, and the frolicsome little girl always called him the Angel.

"Good morning, Angel," said she. "Have you come to show my apartments?"

"Come in, mademoiselle," said the young worker, rising to meet Jeanne. "The show will cost nothing, only eighty-five steps. One is rewarded when they reach here, it is always as bright as now! Windows full of sun, gutters full of sparrows, and a balcony full of flowers."

"These flowers are not worth as much as the ones you make, mademoiselle!" said Jeanne, taking a moss-rose from the table where the young girl was at work.

"The Angel has not said to me half as much as this in the last six months," said the florist, looking at the porter, who stood leaning on the handle of the door, listening to the conversation of the young girls, with the immovable gravity of a Roman senator in his chair of state.

"Your little nest suits me, mademoiselle, and I will take it," said Jeanne, opening her porte-monnaie to pay the retaining fee.

The porter pocketed the piece, and then said: "Where do you reside, mademoiselle?"

"Taitbout street, Hotel of Trois Frères; but why do you ask?"

"To seek for your references," replied he with a majestic air.

Jeanne was much surprised.

"It is now the custom," replied the cerberus.

"It will soon be worse," said the florist; "they will ask for your certificate of vaccination before allowing you to ascend the stairs, and a security of ten thousand francs for a garret window in the sixth story."

"If the owners should order it," muttered the porter

"You can go for my reference as soon as you please," replied Jeanne; "but as I am in haste, you will please give me my answer to-morrow morning."

"Before ten o'clock! We know our duty. But I must tell you, that we require from lone ladies a month's rent in advance."

"And when we leave you, you will give us the interest of our money?" said the florist with an arch look.

Jeanne blushed at this unlooked-for requisition, for even this moderate rent would take away the fourth of her humble means, and she felt that it would embarrass her, at a time when she was obliged to furnish her rooms. She would have withdrawn, but her pride prevented. The poorer one is, the more we try to hide it. And besides it would be the same everywhere.

"Very well!" replied she, after a moment's hesitation; "I will pay in advance."

The florist left next morning, and the keys were given to Jeanne.

She must now furnish her rooms—a very easy task to those who have money in this luxurious Paris — but alas for the little purse!

As Jeanne had none of the wished-for pupils, and had already learned not to trust to her future hopes, and as she knew after furnishing, she must still live, she fixed a small sum for her expenses, and determined that nothing should induce her to cross the line.

All she could spare was one hundred francs. She would not be able to be very luxurious or to throw much money away.

But Jeanne was ingenious, and could manage very well with a little. She bought a small table for the centre-piece of the room she fancifully called her little saloon. A little étagère hid the bare walls on one side. Chairs happened to be very high this year; so she determined to buy only one. "One cannot sit on two chairs at once," said she, "but suppose I have company?—I will request them to sit down, and myself remain standing, it will be more respectful."

"Suppose two friends come at the same time."

"Oh well! they can sit in turns," said she, laughing to herself.

"I must buy some curtains, neigh-

bors are neighbors! and they might be indiscreet."

The fire place was enormous—Jeanne had it closed up.

"Suppose it should be cold next winter."

"Nonsense! it is never cold in Paris. Cold is only an idea! Do not think about it, and we will be warm." Her apartment was very humbly furnished, but it had a respectable air. One more chair might have been better than some Persian curtains decorated with birds; but they only cost fifteen cents per yard, and hid two very ugly doors, and gave a slight air of luxury to the saloon. Two pieces of delph—one of Rouen and the other of Nevers—both broken, but so little! tried to give an artistic air and elegant tone to the apartment. Mlle. Derville looked at her own work with great satisfaction and exclaimed: this is my own home and all is mine. I am satisfied.

Alas! a saloon is not is enough for a woman's happiness; there is a bed-room to be thought about. But the saloon had almost emptied her little purse, and the sight of her bare bed-room recalled this fact. When one wishes to furnish a chamber, the bed is the first idea; she searched everywhere, but finding a bedstead was beyond her means, she determined to purchase only one mattress, and to place that on the floor. When one has a pillow a bolster is useless. Is a pillow positively necessary? If I raise the mattress a little at the head it will also be useless. Away with the pillow! A mattress and two sheets are all that is necessary—the rest are luxuries. I will not permit myself.

She ordered what she required very distinctly, and returned home.

CHAPTER XI.

JEANNE, I must confess, did not sleep very comfortably this first night. She was nervous and restless, and heard the clock strike every hour. Youth has great confidence in its own powers. Jeanne acknowledged this with an irresistible logic.

"I am an honest girl; I have never injured any one; I will behave well, no matter what happens; God will not abandon me. I only ask to live quietly, by hard work. Do I exact too much? The times are hard now, but these unfortunate days are only trials, to which I must learn to submit, to hope, to wait. But suppose the trial endures for several weeks—I will not have one penny left, and the days of miracles are gone."

Jeanne had never been alone before; it weighed heavily on her spirits. She had always lived with others; her childhood had been cradled in the love and tenderness of her home. At St. Denis she had found the respect and affection of her teachers and companions. With Victorine she had enjoyed the flowers and poetry of friendship. On leaving school she had tasted at Blanchelande all the delights and fascinations which the world spreads before youth and beauty. With Maxence she had breathed the perfume of a first love. At the miserable establishment of Mme. de Sainte Colombe she enjoyed the wild sallies of the Irish girl. At the hotel the arrivals and departures—a few words of politeness with the lady at the desk, kept her from feeling isolated and cut off entirely from her race.

Now all was changed; she was in an apartment scantily furnished, in a strange house in Paris, without family or servants, where she might die, with no one to soothe her last moments or receive her last sigh.

All this fell on Jeanne's heart very heavily, notwithstanding her efforts.

She did not send for novels to console her, for she had felt their enervating effect, but for more solid literature. She bought a book, entitled "Letters of a Scholar of Saint Denis," where she found a complete resume of the whole course of female education.

She thus recalled in a few days what it had taken her years to learn, and was much better prepared to fulfil her duties.

To be a teacher, however, scholars are absolutely necessary. But the scholars did not come, and her small capital diminished rapidly. She was frightened at the cost of living in Paris. She took in the morning only one cup of milk, which the dairywoman as she passed left with the porter, and which she had christened too much already, but which was again baptized by the porter, and drank by Jeanne cold, to save fuel.

In the evening they sent her a humble meal from a neighboring restaurant, for which they made her pay double, on the pretext that things are so much dearer when brought to the rooms in the city.

Jeanne calculated her expenses each week, and saw with terror her debtor's account widening, which does not frighten sharp men of the world, but which causes great trouble to simple housekeepers, without friends, protectors, or relations. There was not much hope of scholars coming.

She timidly gave some cards to the tradesmen who fitted up her rooms, but it was not in their power to aid her.

One must be known to be able to accomplish anything, and one must accomplish something before being known.

The young florist, whose apartments Jeanne had taken, and who had taken a great fancy to Jeanne, came to see her one Sunday. It was dinner time. The repast was very humble, and Jeanne was very sad.

Aglaé Sorel, this was the young worker's name, was lively, frank, young, and generous, a perfect type of a Parisian grisette—but a grisette in the best meaning of the term—open-hearted and light-headed.

"Well, indeed! do you eat all alone in this way?" said she to Jeanne, whom she surprised seated at table.

"Bless me! what else can I do?"

"Oh, I could not do so. The pieces would stick in my throat; nothing would go down, my good young lady. But this is not life—there were more songs in this nest when I was here."

"And who do you wish me to dine with? I have no canary birds," replied Jeanne with a sad smile.

"You are not proud, mademoiselle; I believe you are too noble for that," continued Aglaé, leaning her elbows on the table, and looking in Jeanne's face with her bright black eyes.

"I believe," replied Jeanne, "I am not—perhaps I might be if I had the right to be so. But why do you ask me this question, my child?"

"Because, if I dared, I would invite you to dine with us once—only to see—in a house very plain, but better than a restaurant, and less dear—if you will consent."

"But with whom do you dine there?"

"With some good honest girls, humble workers, dressed in delaines and muslins, a little silk here and there, but only on Sundays; with loyal creatures, who gain their livelihood by work, and who owe nothing except to their own fingers. Come, try how you like it—the show costs nothing!—all women, not a man in the dining-room; that will suit you."

Aglaé Sorrel's offer was so cordial that Jeanne could not possibly decline. So she accepted. The young florist came for Jeanne the next day at six, and took her to an establishment where she could obtain much better meals at a lower rate than she had done at her restaurant. The young girls received Jeanne with simple and cordial politeness, mingled with respect; and the colonel's daughter soon saw that Aglaé had described her to them. She did not expect to find among them the ideas or manners she had been accustomed to in her former life. They certainly had not been scholars of Saint Dennis. Most of them of humble birth, had gone from the infant school, and passed through the common school rapidly, to be shut up in a trades-room or a workshop. This was their whole education.

But, whatever may have been their social condition, two women are always nearer to each other than two men, in the same situations. Women possess a faculty of adaptation unknown to our harder and less yielding natures. She yields with a better grace to necessity, and can give without taking from others. The contact with Aglaé Sorrel's friends did not injure Jeanne's delicate susceptibilities. All tried to show how much honored they felt by her presence. Jeanne felt that gratitude alone would compel her to enjoy herself, and she did not find it a hard task to appear amiable. Nothing seemed easier.

At last she said to herself, as she listened to their joyous chit-chat, "This is better than being alone!"

When, in thought, she contrasted the brilliant life at the chateau de Blanchelande with her present miserable existence in the Rue de Clichy—when she compared her first hostess, at the Maisons-Lafitte, with the noble girls who this

day offered her a dinner, she could not help a bitter feeling of regret at her hard fate.

Whilst looking and listening to these young girls, all without fortune—with no certain future—but who bore the hardships of life bravely, careless and happy, mixing work and songs, some salutary thoughts came to Mlle. Derville. She said to herself, "it was better, after all, to make a dress or trim a bonnet, than to die foolishly of hunger in a garret with the airs of a princess."

As her intellect did not seem of any use to her at this time, she would be too happy if her fingers would condescend to feed her.

"I was very proud at Saint Denis," said she to herself, "when I went into the sewing-room, after a class of history, of literature or of music. I often laughed at the good Mme. Dionis, when she said, in her mincing voice:

"'Do not despise these lowly labors, mademoiselle; they are, undoubtedly, modest and humble, but they are very useful. The needle is our best friend; a woman who knows how to use her needle will never starve.'

"Well, then, eh! eh! Jeanne Derville, with the highest prizes for rhetoric! let us see what you can draw from this *lost art!* I have taken the airs of a queen, in presenting my task done with too little care. I see now how right the worthy woman was! It is not my diplomas, nor my belt of honor, nor my tree of recompense, planted in the garden with so much ceremony, which will support me. It will be this poor little despised needle! Eh! what little things take a big place in life sometimes! Alice has abandoned me; I have written twice, without any reply. She is absorbed by her Rollina—and perhaps calumniates me! Good-bye, lessons! all that is ended—I must get out of this!"

Her resolution once taken, she determined to put it into execution. She told Anglaé her resolution, who communicated it to the whole group of young girls. They had been very discreet, and had asked her no questions—although they had discussed it among themselves—how she lived. They received, therefore, this confidence with eager sympathy.

"You are right, mademoiselle," said Aglaé, "work is a good thing, and makes time fly. I am certain if I did nothing I should feed on myself. How can one get through the day with nothing to do? Besides, one will never see on your form that you have worked—they will hardly see it on the end of your fingers."

"And if they should see it, do you think that would make me blush, my poor child?" replied Jeanne, with noble pride. "Only one thing would make me blush—as I have no fortune, to live without work."

"You speak like a brave girl. But," said the florist, examining Jeanne's hand, "it is indeed a long time since you have sewed. I do not see any needle pricks on this fine skin—the marks would show themselves."

"That is a fact—but it will soon come to me."

"Are you skilful?"

"I wish to be."

"And you can be all you wish. You seem to me to have the fingers of a fairy. Rose, the pretty little girl that sat alongside of me at dinner yesterday, whom you called the white rose, will introduce you to Mme. Clara des Glaieuls, one of our fashionable dress-makers, who is constantly complaining that she can obtain no fit person to speak to her best customers when she is absent. This will just do for you! I am sure that when she has seen you"—

"Stop!" said Jeanne. "I must be frank with you. Without being very bashful, I am always embarrassed with people I do not know. And then, to tell you the truth, I would not like to serve behind a counter. I should much prefer, if possible, to work at home."

"Oh! I understand; and this way you can also give lessons from time to time, if by chance any pupils come."

"Yes, if *by chance!*" murmured Jeanne, with a melancholy smile.

CHAPTER XII.

TWO days after this, the colonel's daughter, at one time the crowned scholar of Saint Denis—she who at one moment had hoped to become suddenly rich and titled—Jeanne Derville—our heroine, sewed on a white dress that

Rose had brought her—all cut out—and which she arranged for her. It is a beautiful white satin dress—a bridal-robe, Rose told her, with eyes that sparkled at the sound of the word marriage—a magic word for all young girls!

"It is a good start for you. It will bring you good luck!"

Jeanne set to work with all her heart—for it was her first attempt—and she did not wish the little worker to be reproached on her account.

Besides, what young girl, let her be as indifferent as she supposes, having a bridal robe to make, would not give it all her care? The bride was perhaps not beautiful; and if she could not be loved for herself, she might be for her surroundings. Whilst the needle ran in the satin, a thousand thoughts ran through the soul of Jeanne Derville. Work that engages only the hand, has this sometimes dangerous charm, it leaves our spirits too free—one dreams everything while working.

Jeanne said to herself she was old enough to be married, that she loved and had been loved, perhaps she was still loved, that she had heard the sweet avowal of a charming love, and if she had been in a different state, as regards fortune, a well-born fiancé would conduct her to the altar. She made many painful comparisons between what she was and what she might have been. She thought of Maxence, who had crossed her path like a dream—of Maxence, who had dazzled, charmed, and perhaps forgotten her; but who might, perhaps, have guarded, while far away, his faithful remembrances, who perhaps would soon return—bring back his faith to her.

"The one I am working for is happier than I am. She has what I am waiting for. She possesses what I still hope for. May she be happy, this beautiful unknown. And may the bitter thoughts, which torment me while I sew her bridal robe, never come near her spirit."

A fiancée cannot wait. Her white robe must be ready at the appointed moment. Rose and Jeanne worked day and night. But ten o'clock sounded on the morning of the marriage-day, when they put in the last stitch.

"All is right!" said Rose, inspecting the work. "I fear it is a little too full in the left side of the body."

"You think so?"

"Look yourself."

"A little, perhaps, but it is easily repaired."

"Certainly—it is done. Hold! try it on. They will be in such a hurry that they will not take time to let us fit it. But though you are a little larger than the young lady, I can fit it well on you."

Jeanne put on the dress, and Rose complimented her as she arranged it.

"How becoming white is to you. If the young lady's intended should know you, I would pity his wife."

"Hold your tongue, little goose," replied Jeanne, embracing her, "and see quickly what is to be altered."

"I have seen all!"

"Then take it off!"

And Jeanne took off the dress, as if it had been the famous tunic of Déjanira, dipped in the poisoned blood of Nessus, whose tissue consumed both of them with the same flame.

"Now," said Rose, "all is perfect; put on your hat; I have a carriage at the door; come with me; I will introduce you to Mme. des Glaieuls. She is a very good woman. I have told her about you, and she desires to see you."

Rose took the dress carefully on her two arms, and without waiting for Jeanne's reply, with her white burden before her, descended the staircase like a whirlwind. Jeanne followed, and five minutes later the two girls made their solemn entrance into the house of Mme. Clara des Glaieuls, fashionable dressmaker.

The corset of the dressmaker had not strangled the woman's heart in Clara, and the desire to accumulate rapidly a fortune, so common in Paris, had not stifled the germ of all her good feelings.

Rose, one of her favorites, had spoken of Mlle. Derville in such a way as to arouse her interest. Clara received her kindly, and with her most amiable words. Without alluding to anything that might hurt her feelings, she showed that she appreciated her conduct, and assured her she would always find employment in her establishment.

Jeanne was not spoilt. It was a

long time since she had heard such kind words. They went to her heart. Unfortunate ones have very tender souls.

"Now, mademoiselle," said the patroness, turning to Rose, "you must take the dress to the right place, Mlle. Derville may accompany you. I already rely on her good taste. You can dress the bride yourselves. It is an attention we always show to our best customers," said she to Jeanne.

The two young girls started. Jeanne got into the carriage first, and Rose placed the dress on her knees, with a maternal and religious carefulness, then she seated herself alongside of her companion. The carriage crossed rapidly the Chaussée d'Antin, and drove down the Boulevard des Italiens. Before Jeanne had time to recognise the place, they turned into the Rue de Grammont.

"Oh! where are we going to? where are we going to?" asked Jeanne of the white Rose.

"Very near here. Do not be uneasy."

"But where? Tell me where?"

The carriage stopped.

"Enter!" cried the little porter to the coachman, "the gate is open."

"No, no! he must not enter," said Jeanne; "let me go away, let me get out! I will not—I cannot! My God! It is she! If it should be he!"

"Who is she? Who is he? Explain yourself. I do not understand one word."

"Get out! Get out then!" said a footman, who had spied the carriage, and who ran to open the door for the young girls. "They are all waiting for you. Madame is very impatient, and mademoiselle is in a great way."

"The ceremony is put off," said Rose, with an impertinent air.

She was not afraid of the livery. She looked at her companion. Jeanne was as pale as death.

"What is the matter? What ails you?" asked she. "You seem as if you were going to be very ill."

"No, it is nothing! A little faintness of the head! We have been so hurried! I feel better."

"Then, give me the dress, and let us go up!"

Jeanne's limbs trembled a little while she mounted the stairs, but she steadied herself. The footman who showed them the way, was the same who had opened the door for her the evening she came from Saint Denis. She was in the same ante-room, ornamented with the same hunting engravings. She was in Mme. de Blanchelande's house; Victorine was the bride; it was Victorine's wedding dress she had made!

"I believe I shall go crazy," said she, in a low tone, pressing her forehead on her nervous hands.

Two or three women servants (one of whom she remembered) showed them at once into Mme. de Blanchelande's room. Victorine was standing in the middle of the room, with her hair all arranged in the bridal wreath, waiting for her wedding dress. A contented look on her face, which gave her a sweet and attractive appearance. She was not so aristocratic looking as Jeanne, but she was very beautiful, and it would not be a very difficult task to love her. Rose went first, carrying the dress, and thus hid Mlle. Derville. But when she passed behind the young lady to assist in fastening her dress she suddenly disclosed the daughter of the colonel.

The two friends thus found themselves in each others' presence, facing each other at a short distance under very trying circumstances for both. Jeanne was as white as marble; but she had recovered her sang froid, and was frightfully calm. As to Victorine, when she recognized her old companion — her friend, her rival—she felt an overpowering emotion, which showed itself in her trembling hands and sudden backward movement, as if she wished to run away. She bit her lips, half-closed her eyes, but did not speak.

"What is the matter?" said Mme. de Blanchelande, running to her daughter.

Victorine glanced at Jeanne.

"You here, mademoiselle?" said the baroness, divided between surprise and anger, and uncertain of Jeanne's intentions. "What are you doing in my house?"

"What is it all about?" said another lady, approaching the group. By whose haughty appearance and aquiline nose Jeanne instantly recognized Maxence's mother.

"Behold my executioner!" thought Jeanne. Then turning to the baroness she said, in a quiet tone, "You ask why

I came to your house? I reply—I have not come there; for it would ill become Mlle. Derville to have any communication with Mme. La Baroness de Blanchelande; but I was sent here! I am now, madame, a working-woman. It is I who have made the dress of Vict—, pardon me, of Mlle. de Blanchelande; and I came to put it on her."

The Countess de Bois-Robert immediately understood the whole thing; she thought it very singular, but also very inconvenient, and as she still feared her son's meeting this beautiful and fascinating creature, whom he had loved so devotedly, she said, drily enough, to Jeanne, "We wish to believe, mademoiselle, that chance alone has brought you here. It is unfortunate, as you understand, that we cannot accept your services."

"I offered them, madame; I do not force them," replied Jeanne, with much dignity; and whilst speaking she started to withdraw.

"Not this way," said the countess, standing before the door of the saloon, where Maxence might already be; and as she seemed the one in command, she pointed out a door which led to a back staircase used by the servants.

Jeanne brought all her strength to bear; and after casting a proud, sad look on Mlle. de Blanchelande, made a sign to Rose, and they both left silently. The carriage was still waiting, and they got in.

As soon as she was alone with Rose, Jeanne hid her face in her hands and sobbed violently.

"Dear me! what is the matter? what in the world has happened to you?" said the little worker, unfastening the button of Jeanne's dress to let her breathe more easily. "Some misfortune seems to have happened to you during the last hour."

"Nothing, it is nothing!" said Jeanne, recovering her self-command by a violent effort.

"Perhaps it is nothing now," said Rose, taking her hand. "It was a great deal, a little while ago. Heavens! how you frightened me."

"Dear friend, how good you are," said Jeanne, drawing her close to her.

"It is not very hard to be kind to you, for you are so sweet and amiable," replied Rose, pressing the hand that she still held in her own grasp.

Jeanne felt touched by this true, lively sympathy, and she needed a confidante and consolation.

So she said: "My child, I will have no secret from you—I wish to tell you all! Know then that this young girl, formerly my friend, is going to marry a man whom I have loved, and who has loved me. Do you understand?"

"I understand perfectly. It is like myself and M. Ernest. Alas! Mademoiselle Jeanne, all young girls have in their memories such a story as yours. This does not hinder the first blow from being hard, when it comes so unexpectedly as this has—cry a little—it will relieve you."

"No, no! I cannot cry now—I must not have red eyes—later, later! Behold! I am strong now—my color has returned—has it not?"

"Yes, like a white rose," said the worker, raising her pretty little head.

The coachman, having no orders, drove slowly.

"Where do you wish to go now?" asked Rose.

"To church."

"To their church?"

"Yes!"

"To make a scene?"

"Oh! how can you?"

"We will go! I am wrong—I am certain all you do is right—but in your place, I would not open my wound the second time by this sight."

"Go to the church of Petits-Pères," said she to the coachman! "Notre Dame des Victoires," you know where.

Her eyes shone with feverish light, and her cheeks, so pale a little while ago, were now scarlet.

M. le Baron de Blanchelande was an important person, and all were aware of the ceremony.

The church accommodates itself to all fortunes; it is modest with the poor, pompous with the rich and great. Nothing was too elegant for Mlle. de Blanchlande and M. le Comte de Bois-Robert. The whole church had the air of a fête, the altar shone with gold and brightness. Flowers were all around. The curtains were withdrawn from the organ gallery, which was filled with first class performers. The guards in full dress, white

cravats, black coats, &c., endeavored to perserve order among the curious crowd, which increased every moment.

The Swiss, that a terrified child had once called the "Punch of the good God," clothed in his grand costume, struck his cane on the marble.

Jeanne felt bewildered on entering. She looked at the altar where the sacrifice of which she was the victim was to be made; she involuntarily fell on her knees and prayed. We have times of instinctive religion, when our soul longs to open itself before God. Jeanne was not of a mystic nature, she had not the exalted ardor of Louis de Gonzague or of Theresa d'Avila, but she had a pious and believing soul, and sorrow drew her to the common father of all his creatures. She wished to ask his support during the severe trial his hand had inflicted.

But the God whose aid she sought in prayer is the God of the unhappy, of the young, and of the feeble; and it seemed as if she could not find him in this church dressed for a fête. She soon arose, and step by step advanced to the seats reserved for the invited guests. The sexton examined her simple toilet, and judged she could not belong to either of these rich families; so he politely asked her if she was a wedding guest?

"No, no!" replied Jeanne, quickly and coloring.

"Then will you please to take one of those side-seats—these are reserved."

Jeanne silently obeyed, and, followed by Rose, found herself back of the choir, half hid by the iron grating.

The voice of reason, to which unhappily she would not listen, said to her "This is enough—now you must leave—go away." A stronger voice, and one more imperious—that of passion,—said to her "No! stay still! Since you have done so much, you must go through. You must walk to the end of this sorrowful path, where your feet bleed, where your knees are torn. You must see all, and surfeit your eyes with your trial and sorrow." And this was the voice to which she listened. She seated herself, leaning her head on a pillar, wide awake to the slightest sound.

Victorine had been much disturbed by the meeting with Jeanne, and it required the efforts of both mothers to reassure and comfort her. Her indisposition delayed the ceremony, and she was still pale when she reached the church. Paleness, however, is becoming in a bride.

Jeanne felt a hand on her sboulder, and Rose whispered—

"Here they come! Take care!"

The church door opened, and the cortege entered, preceded by the majestic Swiss. A chill passed through Mlle. Derville, and she shuddered from head to foot! In all this crowd she saw only one person—that was him. A sculptor or a painter would not have wished for a better model to represent young manhood than Maxence. He seemed as handsome to Jeanne now, as formerly at Blanchelande, except that on his face there was a coldness and constraint. It did not expand with those joyous rays of happiness which illuminate the face of a man on the eve of marriage with the woman of his heart. The relations stood up, and the young couple kneeled on the step of an altar, covered with scarlet velvet, embroidered with gold. The priest, in his holiday robes, after praying silently, turned to the people and addressed a few touching words to those whose union he was about to bless. He told them of the duties of marriage, and of the inestimable joys of loves permitted and blessed by God—the only true love—in such an enthusiastic manner that his whole audience was carried away. The charms and perils of these eternal unions were depicted in such a way as to show how perfectly a priest understood human passions. He painted in glowing colors the chaste delight of two married people who love each other; two lives finding mutual aid in a reciprocal affection, doubling all their joys—the heart union, lasting beyond the tomb, and the passing tenderness of a day merely a prelude to the eternal tenderness of a life which never ends! In this magnificent language—echo of Christian platonism—love of man and woman was represented as the greatest of human affairs—as a union which united earth and heaven—as the first pure flight of matter, ready to lose itself in the source of all love.

How many persons are there who

listen to a wedding address, let it be ever so eloquent? The bride is too much agitated; the groom is too distracted. It is well if, in a large assembly, there are two or three who seize the thoughts and ideas of the orator. It is above all in Paris that one may preach to a desert! but the happy vicar had to-day one young girl for an auditor who listened and understood him.

Jeanne's heart echoed each word; it was thus she understood love; it was thus she understood life and the communion of souls when all is one between them, and the sharing of all blessings and trials, the one being increased, while the other is lessened by being divided. This life she felt she would have enjoyed with Maxence—with him who was about to try it with another.

All the eloquent ideas of the young preacher tore her soul like a sharp instrument, which quickened all the faculties of her being to suffering and to love. To suffer, to love, so often synonymous terms.

The marriage ceremony soon commenced, full of poetic grandeur. Jeanne did not know it. Under other circumstances, it would have struck her enthusiastic imagination; now it weighed her down. She followed as well as she could. She saw an adored hand—a faithless one—place on the finger of the young girl a ring, token of an unalterable union, which she, by right, alone ought to receive and wear. She heard them exchange promises to love before God, and the priest invoked the blessings of heaven upon them.

What the unfortunate one suffered in this slow agony of her heart she could not have told. This marriage mass was for her a mass of death, at which she assisted while still living—weeping over her youthful tomb. She had lost all consciousness of time—minutes seemed centuries. She believed this cruel trial to which she had subjected herself would never end, and that she would see forever this marriage of Maxence and Victorine.

Mlle. Derville had not the least idea of creating a scene, or playing the role of the accusing apparition by showing between the two pillars a pale phantom head, to bring remorse to the guilty couple, and to recall tragically her remembrance to the unfaithful ones who had forgotten her.

No such thing could be feared from her. The drama was acted in her soul. It was indeed an internal tragedy without one external sign.

Neither Maxence nor Victorine had the least suspicion that there was a poor creature near them whose soul was pierced to its inmost depths by the sight of their happiness.

She was neither perceived nor recognised by either.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE Baron de Blanchelande, however, who long since had settled ideas on the poetry of marriage, and was consequently rather absent-minded, did not keep his eye fixed on the altar, but cast furtive glances around after the women, searching for a pretty face, without much regard for the sanctity of the place. He soon espied behind the rim-railing the young seamstress, whom he remembered to have seen with his daughter at his own house, and after examining her companion with the eyes of a lynx, he recognised Jeanne. This unexpected meeting caused M. de Blanchelande much emotion. His feelings for the young girl were much more serious than any he had felt for many years. It was not, however, a passion which engrossed his whole life. These passions are rare, especially with a fast man like M. de Blanchelande; but let us say, to his honor, that though he had been defeated in his ends, he still took a sincere interest in Jeanne, and if he loved her a great deal for himself, he loved her a little also on her own account.

Do not let us ask more of an unsuccessful "Lovelace," whose retreat we are quite willing to cover.

On seeing Mademoiselle Derville at the marriage of her rival with the man she loved, and who she had believed loved her, he felt all she must suffer, and pitied her. This generous sentiment was soon followed by one much more selfish. He thought that if the Count Robert was the serious obstacle existing between him and Mlle. Derville, it was not a bad thing for this obstacle to be removed even by a violent

blow, and that Jeanne, seeing there was no more hope for her in that quarter, would turn to him, who could know where her despair would drive her. The opportunity was good. M. de Blanchelande desired nothing better than to quit the role of father he was playing at present, for that of an adventurer, and to obtain his purpose with the charming Jeanne. But this was rather a difficult thing to do. He could not leave his daughter and son-in-law at the altar to march round the church after a young girl, no matter how beautiful she might be. He must stay quietly in his seat, like the rest. Then he must go to the vestry-room to sign his name at the head of the list; and what would be said if he did not go to the customary family-breakfast? The whole day was taken up. He was forced to play his official role.

The next day he was obliged to settle the people in a pretty little villa the countess had hired near Chantilly, and from there, without returning to Paris, he must conduct the baroness to her own family. The really tender mother needed all sorts of distractions to soften the blow which separated her from Victorine. Mothers are always this way—they lament when their daughters are not married, and sob when they are.—Tears for ever!

Mme. de Blanchelande's family lived in Belgium. The baron could not leave the instant he arrived, so it would take four or five days, and in that time he might perhaps lose all traces of Jeanne, whom he had so fortunately discovered.

Common prudence told him, that he must not appear to have noticed her, or he would put her on her guard and lose the benefit of a surprise. He remembered he could find Rose at Mme. des Glaieuls and thus find Jeanne, and he arranged a little campaign which must succeed notwithstanding the delay in the commencement of the affair. These edifying thoughts filled his mind during the whole of the mass, which was celebrated with great pomp in honor of his daughter.

When the ceremony was ended the wedding-party followed the clergy to the vestry-room where they were to arrange the last formalities. Rose saw that the procession must pass directly by them, so she led or rather almost carried Jeanne away, at the moment when Maxence came forward with the woman on his arm whom God and men had just given him for a wife.

The two young girls could leave in the confusion of the crowd without being remarked; some voices said the bride was beautiful, others replied that the groom was still handsomer.

"How happy she seems," said one.

"He has a gloomy air, I think."

"White becomes her."

"See, he has a blue coat."

"The fashion for rich men is to wear black."

"Black is the color for notaries."

"See how he smiles as he makes her pass before him into the vestry."

Rose heard all this, but did not wish Jeanne to, so she hastened her steps and made free use of her elbows to force a passage through the crowd—a very difficult thing to accomplish.

Mlle. Derville followed mechanically, holding her arm as if she were intoxicated or in a dream. The two young girls at last were outside of the church. Rose stopped a carriage that was passing, and helped Jeanne in and took her home. Jeanne was unconscious of every thing; like a body without a soul.

CHAPTER XIV.

SIX days afterwards an elegant gentleman, who appeared still young, thanks perhaps to the artifices of the toilet, passed rapidly up the five flights of difficult stairs that led to Mlle. Derville's apartments.

"Oh!" said he, wiping the perspiration from his forehead; "I have had enough. Virtue resides too near heaven: I should prefer it on the ground floor. But let us go to the east, corridor A., second door to the left; a little green ribbon. This honest porter has given me plenty of information for the louis I paid him. All that should be easy to find. Here is the corridor A.; we will soon find the door; here it is! little green ribbon? this is certainly the place."

M. de Blanchelande, for it was he, took a few steps forward as if he did not wish to be heard. Just as he raised his hand to take hold of the green ribbon,

a man came suddenly out of Jeanne's apartment into contact with him. The baron withdrew a step; but he soon saw from the grave air, white cravat, and early visit of the stranger, that he was a doctor. The doctor recognised at a glance that the baron was a man of the world, and assured by the red rose on his breast, concluded that he was visiting his young patient with the best of motives. He took him for the president, at least the secretary, of some of the benevolent societies with which France has been so richly endowed for several years. So he spoke first, with respectful deference.

"She is very ill, sir—the poor child is very ill!"

These words made the baron shudder—he had not had the slightest presentiment of such a misfortune.

Without stopping to ask any more questions, and wishing to judge for himself what he had to hope or fear; especially anxious to avoid all embarrassing explanations, he said:

"I know this, and come on that account."

He entered. The doctor saw that the benefactor of his young patient did not desire to talk any more at present, he therefore bowed and descended.

M. de Blanchelande crossed quickly the little room Jeanne had ambitiously called her saloon, and soon entered the second room, which was the young girl's bed-chamber.

We have told how miserable this room was. It was absolutely bare.

Alas! Jeanne had not the most essential furniture to a bed-room, the bed. The colonel's daughter lay on a mattress thrown on the floor in a corner, and watched over by one of those public nurses—true servants of the dead—who seem waiting only to close your eyes, to throw the cloth over your head—and their sinister task once ended, to pay themselves for their trouble, by carrying off all on which they can lay their rapacious hands—fortunate when they do not hasten the too slow and impatiently-looked-for death.

Seated on the only chair, her head on her hand, her disordered hair escaping from her cap, which was all awry, a bottle of brandy by her side, this "Megœra" for three francs a day, did not raise her head when the door opened.

M. de Blanchelande could study at his ease the spectacle of misery, of which his fortunate life had never even had the least conception.

This flagrant poverty struck him with pity and terror. Misery is like death, it causes fear to the rich, who are not used to its terrible aspect. He felt also reproached—the poor girl had lived in his family, been intimate with his wife and daughter, and perhaps he had contributed to plunge her into this terrible abyss—he had known she was poor, and he had done nothing to aid her in her fight against poverty. One man could have relieved her—this man loved her, she loved him—he could easily have given her the rank and fortune for which she was so suited—and this man, a victim, like herself, to the snares two powerful families had thrown around them, had cruelly abandoned her—he had married Jeanne's friend—and he himself had given his daughter to him. It was under this last blow that the poor girl's health had given way.

The baron was then the real cause of these misfortunes that he saw before him. This painful idea did not stifle all selfish sentiments, but suspended their expression, and left only pity in his heart. This overwhelming pity nailed him to the threshold of Mlle. Derville's chamber, and he dared not enter.

Jeanne turned her head from the wall towards the baron, who could see the ravages the last few days had produced. She was remarkably thin; her eyes shone with fever, and her cheeks seemed on fire; her long dishevelled hair covered her half-naked shoulders. She was still beautiful, but of a frightful beauty.

"I am thirsty," murmured she, without opening her eyes, and with a feeble voice, which seemed like a little sigh of wind.

To this sorrowful cry the nurse only replied by a heavy stupefied grunt, but did not move from her seat.

"I am thirsty," Jeanne said again.

"With people sick as she is, one never has a moment's peace," murmured the horrible creature, rising, however, to take a glass of water from the little

table. As she turned to the door she perceived M. de Blanchelande. She was electrified at this sight—her old nerves trembled. She quickly approached Jeanne's bed, and said, with a tone which she tried to make obliging and affectionate:

"Here I am! Here I am! dear young lady! What do you wish?"

"I want a drink."

The nurse presumed that the baron was one of the race called "Protecteurs," and that she must do her best to obtain his good graces, hoping that he had not noticed anything, he remained so immovable; so she consulted the doctor's orders, mixed the medicines, and presented the cup with an air intended to be very maternal, but which was only grotesque.

"Drink," said she; "drink it all, my beautiful little one; it is good, and then it will do you so much good. It will make you well. Every one wishes to cure you. I above all. God knows that I work hard enough to do so, without caring for the trouble."

Jeanne Derville, without seeming to notice this cajolery, raised herself with pain on her elbow, and with a trembling hand carried the cup to her lips. As she did so, she saw M. de Blanchelande. A thousand sorrowful remembrances rushed over her at this sight, she pushed the cup away, and her inanimate head rolled on the bed, half hidden in her hair.

The baron pushed the nurse away, and took the poor invalid in his arms, resting Jeanne's pale cold head on his breast.

Perhaps this contact aroused her, perhaps she was warned by that secret instinct that watches over and for woman, even when her reason sleeps. Jeanne returned to herself, and recognising on whose arms she was, disengaged herself with a movement of horror, and so suddenly, that she struck her head against the wall. But insensible at this moment to pain, and recovering her energy with her fierce indignation, she drew the sheet over her breast with one hand, and with the other showed the baron the door.

"Go!" said she. "Go, monsieur!"

"Jeanne! Mademoiselle!" said M. de Blanchelande, trying to disarm her by his gentleness; "you are as hard on yourself as you are unjust to me. I have done wrong, I know that; but forget it, since I am conscious of my faults. Believe, henceforward, they will be expiated by my repentance, and the sorrow I feel at seeing you in this state. You imagine, doubtlessly, that I have caused you much sorrow. Some day you will know that my crimes are more apparent than real. All I ask of you, is not to send me away now. Wait till you are well to be so cruel. Later you can do as you please. When you are better you can dismiss me. Now have pity on yourself, and permit me to take care of you as a friend, as a father."

"Leave me, sir!" cried Jeanne. "Go away! Leave me now! I have done nothing to you—have I? Well! Let me die in peace, this is all I ask from you. It is all I wish from you."

All this was said with a strange, wild excitement. But this violence exhausted her, and she was seized with a violent prostration. She remained for some moments insensible, as if floating between life and death. Two big drops of perspiration ran down her forehead to her cheeks.

"Behold, sir, the way she goes on all the time," said the nurse, indignant at the reception the young girl gave a gentleman, who seemed rich, kind, and anxious to do all he could for her.

The baron would not have been received in this manner if the advice of Mme. Grugear (the name of the hideous old woman) had been sought.

M. de Blanchelande was not the man to listen to these complaints, or to allow a word to be spoken against Mlle. Derville. He ordered the garrulous old woman to keep still, with an imperative gesture, and to soothe Jeanne, left the bed, and looked on in silence.

But the nervous movements of the invalid showed a continued excitement.

The baron did not feel disposed to leave until he had seen the poor invalid to a more favorable mood.

This silent scene lasted for some time, when the door opened, and the young seamstress entered, whom M. de Blanchelande had seen in the church with Jeanne.

When Rose saw the baron she put on a dignified air, which contrasted singu-

larly with her little figure. She felt called upon to personate morality, and reversing the order of things, she admonished a man whose rank and age ought to have exonerated him from receiving it from any one, especially a young girl.

"Ah! sir," said she approaching him, "you desire to be the death of her—have you not done her enough injury already?"

"You are mistaken, mademoiselle," answered the baron in a sad, grave tone, "I have never injured your friend. I have always desired to benefit her. And even now, my greatest desire is to help you to save her—if your kind heart will permit me to assist you in the cares and devotion with which I see you surround her."

"I do not see how you can, sir."

"My God!" replied the baron, glancing around, "there are plenty of opportunities, if you will accept my aid."

As M. de Blanchelande pronounced these last words, he felt he had gained ground in leading the young worker to argue with him.

Rose, blushing, listened. There are some grand souls that feel ashamed of their poverty, as if it was their fault. She soon recovered, and looking M. de Blanchelande modestly but firmly in the face, replied:

"It is true, we are not rich, but we love each other, and try to help each other along. We earn just enough to keep us; but since Mlle. Jeanne is sick we work one hour longer each day on her account, and thank God, she has had at least all the necessaries. The doctor of the neighborhood—an apothecary at her door—and Mme. Grugear—whom you see—for nurse."

"Yes, I know Mme. Grugear! and I would advise you to look after her—I have seen how she nurses."

"Then," continued Rose, "Mme. Grugear is only here through the day. We watch our little invalid all night by turns. Do we not, Jeanne?"

A faint smile passed over Mlle. Derville, and she held out her hand to Rose, as if to thank her.

"Ah, I know you do your duty nobly, and I appreciate it with all my heart," replied the baron, in a low tone; "but there are many things out of your power. Let this be my share of the work, the whole merit of which will be yours. See what a situation your unhappy friend is in. She needs, notwithstanding what you have told me, the most positive necessaries of life. In the state she is in you could not refuse the assistance even of an enemy; and God knows if I am an enemy of hers."

M. de Blanchelande spoke in such a tone that none could doubt the sincerity of his feelings. Rose felt herself almost convinced, for Mme. de Glaieul's pretty little worker was not after all of a very puritanic disposition. She knew the real side of life much better than our heroine. For whilst Mlle. Derville, shaded by the high walls of Saint Denis, studied peaceably the history of the Hebrews, the Greeks, and the Romans, Rose, in the midst of Parisian realities, studied without books the lives of the poor young French people in the workshop and the garret. She had gone through hard phases of existence, and endured all sorts of privations. And now, notwithstanding all her efforts, she saw her dear young companion in one of those sad positions where necessity knows no law; and she asked herself if she was right to refuse in her name, benefits that might restore her to health, and that were not very compromising. M. de Blanchelande saw her hesitation, and, like a skilful tactician, tried to nail the thing on the head. But Jeanne, weak and feeble as she was, had understood all the details of this scene; so raising her head with a painful effort, and pressing Rose's arm with her nervous fingers, she said in a low and thrilling voice—

"Send him away! Send him away, now! I wish nothing from him! his pity even is an injury; and if I can live only through his assistance, I would rather die!"

The invalid's pulse beat frightfully; also the arteries in her temples. The fire of a noble anger and generous indignation lighted the flame in her eyes.

"You hear, sir," said Rose to the Baron de Blanchelande, "she will not be saved by you, and you may be the cause of her death if you insist on remaining."

"Farewell then, unforgiving soul!" replied the baron, looking at Mlle. Der-

ville with as much pity as love, as he silently withdrew.

Mme. Grugear, a close observer of human nature, and who lived by the vices and weaknesses of her race, followed M. de Blanchelande, under the pretext of politeness, but in reality to speak to him privately.

"Charitable sir," said she, in a fawning, hypocritical tone, "you must excuse these young people—they are good—honest, that is certain—and then so poor. See how many things she needs. It is not my fault—I have done all I can."

M. de Blanchelande turned away from this harpy in disgust, but still he placed two napoleons in her hand with his card, saying:

"Here is my address—to-morrow evening when her friend is here, you can come tell me how she is—I order you not to leave her alone."

The nurse promised to do as he desired, and showed the baron out respectfully.

Jeanne was more quiet when she was left alone with her friend.

"How are you to-day?" asked Rose, taking her hand.

"I was a little better before he came—I slept a great deal, and thought of nothing, my head is so empty."

"Oh! that does not disturb me—we can soon fill it. The most important thing is to allay this fever—if you only knew how your delirium frightened poor Aglaé and me—you said such sad things that they went to our hearts. I went to bed late, and so missed the doctor—what did he say to-day?"

"Oh, goodness! you know he never says anything."

"Then he says all he knows," said Rose. "I fear we have fallen into bad hands."

"What can we do? Dearest, I assure you they visit me, and the best is worth no more than the worst—the only difference is, the one kills us and the other allows us to die. But what consequence is it?" added she, with a movement of deep despair, "all go at their appointed time, and they can neither hasten nor retard the momemt. Life, after all, is hardly worth regretting."

"Alas! always these sad thoughts," said the young worker, smoothing the invalid's waving hair. "You must not talk so, for you grieve me—if you have no desire to be cured on your own account, you must for the sake of us, who love you, and have taken the best care of you we could, and who will not be at all flattered to see you die."

"Then I will not die, if it will annoy you! But call back this frightful woman, (oh, darling! if you could only get me another), and order her to make me something to drink—I have a burning thirst!"

CHAPTER XV.

WHILST the sick-nurse—that open sore for solitary poverty—prepares the drink, we will review Jeanne's history in a few words:

Rose, after the marriage, had understood Jeanue's miserable state of mind, and had taken her home. Jeanne was at once seized with such a violent delirious fever that they feared at first for her life, and then for her mind.

One could now see how active affection can be even among the poor. The warmth of mutual charity—the ardent compassion for all who suffer, fired the hearts of these noble young girls whom the devoted zeal of Aglaé Sorel had interested in the misfortunes of Jeanne Derville. Working much, gaining little, only able with skill and economy to make both ends meet at the end of the year, these good creatures forgot their fatigues, troubles, and cares of their hard life, to think only of the sad desolate one, more unhappy even than themselves.

Perhaps such devotion is more frequent among the poor than among the rich. Those who have nothing else to give, give themselves without counting the cost. They consulted together, arranged things, and united their funds; so Jeanne was as carefully attended to by these strangers as if they had been her mother and sisiers.

Her youth and strong constitution did the rest. The doctor could not kill her. The Baron de Blanchelande, obliged, as we have said, to escort his wife to Brussels after Victorine's marriage, had lost sight of Mlle. Derville, when he refound her by the aid of Mme. des Glaieuls.

The young girl was passing through the most dangerous crisis of her illness.

The emotions his visit occasioned doubled the violence of her disease, and they feared each moment for her life; but her hour was not yet come, and she bore up against this new attack with more strength than they had supposed. She recovered.

Her convalesence was long and painful. After a month of perfect quietness she was able, one Sunday, with the help of Rose and Aglaé, to sit down on a bench in the Boulevard. How she enjoyed breathing the fresh air and the bright sun!

Life is always sweet to the young, no matter how unhappy they may be. Jeanne was sad in her inmost heart, but she felt at this moment as if she could not be miserable. Life is long, there is always time enough to suffer. She wished to think now only of the affection, so exquisite, so delicate, and so charming that they had shown her, and the devotion with which they had surrounded her in her illness.

For a well-born heart gratitude is a sentiment of infinite sweetness; there is so much happiness even in the trial that has called it forth.

Jeanne tried to console herself for those who had forgotten her by thinking of others. She listened to Rose. Then resting against a tree, with half-closed eyes she said to herself, "There are some generous natures left in the world —all goodness is not yet exiled from the earth."

CHAPTER XVI.

ONE has said, with great truth, Paris is a peopled desert, a solitude of eighteen hundred thousand souls, remarkably indifferent to individuals, and some one disappears from it at each moment without notice. The vacancy is scarcely made, when it is filled.

Jeanne Derville, notwithstanding her humble position, attracted much attention in the house. Her grace, elegance, and distinguished beauty could not pass unobserved. They had spoken much of her illness, and the day they supposed she was dying, two or three souls prayed for her:

"Poor girl, so young, so charming, what a pity!"

Jeanne's illness had created a benevolent feeling of interest, and they were all rejoiced when the portress, the news agent of the establishment, told them that the pretty invalid was saved.

A middle-aged lady, Mme. d'Escloville, who resided on the first floor, and was rich and benevolent, hearing them speak of Jeanne, had the curiosity to visit her. She ascended the high stairs on the day after Jeanne had first breathed the air. The fresh air had done Jeanne good, and she commenced her work again perhaps too soon; but she felt she must not longer be such a heavy burden to her young friends.

The portress, who had the key of her apartment, introduced her chief boarder, to whom for a thousand reasons she owed great respect.

Jeanne was seated near the window in a ray of sunshine. Some tame birds picked up the crumbs left from her breakfast, and by their joyous notes welcomed her return to life. Two creepers ran up an iron wire, and let fall in all directions their white and blue bells. It was poverty, but clean and bright poverty. Jeanne's beautiful head, idealized still more by her illness, relieved with touching grace this back-ground of fresh verdure. Her white thin transparent hands sewed a hard material with painful effort, accomplishing slowly a task far beyond her strength, but one she had sought.

Thinking the portress had come in as usual alone, she did not raise her eyes from her work.

The visitor contemplated this lovely and touching picture in silence. She was struck by this distinction in poverty, this beauty in misery, and she recognised in the young girl the virtue that she had so carefully guarded throughout this bitter catastrophe.

The portress advanced and said:

"Mlle. Jeanne, Mlle. d'Escloville, the lady from the first floor, has come to see you."

Jeanne rose a little surprised, and with a slight flush on her cheeks; but with a perfectly easy and unembarrassed manner she offered Mlle. d'Escloville the only chair unfortunately at her disposal.

"Mademoiselle," said Mme. d'Esclo-

ville to Jeanne, who remained standing before her, as she had no seat to sit upon, "I did not know, until lately, how ill you have been, or I would not have allowed you to suffer all alone. This isolation must have been very sad."

"I am touched by your goodness, madame, which I have done nothing to merit. But I have not been left entirely alone; I have some friends."

"Yes, but they do not live with you. I am not mistaken—nothing replaces your family."

"You are right, madame; but when one has no family—"

"Poor child! it is true, then—you are an orphan?"

"Yes, madame. I scarcely knew my mother, and my father died before I was ten."

"Oh! I pity you with all my heart. But tell me all; the sincere interest I feel for you authorizes my curiosity."

Jeanne raised her large, clear, limpid, calm eyes to Madame d'Escloville, who could read through them to the depths of her pure soul.

"I believe, madame," said she, in her harmonious and thrilling voice, "that you could not be indiscreet with any one, and I have nothing to hide."

Mme. d'Escloville looked around, but could not see the least sign of another seat, and she could not endure seeing Mlle. Derville standing, in her weak and feeble state.

Jeanne saw what she was looking for, and with a frank movement, said sweetly, "There is only one chair, madame, but I have been sitting so long—it rests me to stand."

"This is a proud, courageous soul!" thought Mme. d'Escoville. "She bears up well against her misfortunes, but I will soon have her seated."

She called the portress, who was still in Jeanne's room, and gave her an order in a low tone. Soon afterwards a footman entered carrying one of those large arm-chairs—soft and downy—dear to the idler and the dreamer, which seem to invite you to repose, by opening their caressing arms, and, suiting themselves to each movement of the body, swallow it up entirely.

Jeanne opened her large eyes, and stammered a thousand thanks, mingled with remonstrances.

"It is for the days I visit you," said Madame d'Escloville, forcing Jeanne into the comfortable seat, while she herself retained the little chair.

"Now," said she, with affectionate gracefulness, "you are at home with me, and I am at home with you; now we can talk. Do you feel a little confidence in me, mademoiselle?"

"Oh! yes, madame, much confidence. One divines, one feels, one sees, how good you are."

"Well, my child," said Madame d'Escloville, who was fascinated by Jeanne's manners and language, "you must relate your history to me. It is a touching one, I am certain. You are not what you appear. I have seen too many women in my time not to know that you are no mere simple worker."

"It is true, madame, that my birth and education did not seem to require me to gain my living by my needle."

"Ah! I guess you have had much trouble?"

"Alas! madame, I have had misfortunes from my birth."

"Tell them to me, dear child."

Encouraged by Mme. d'Escloville's benevolent air, Jeanne related her whole history, except the sorrows of her heart—these she veiled with a delicate reserve. With touching sensibility, she told to her interested visitor of her mother taken off in her prime; of her father soon following his loved one to the grave; her orphaned childhood; her desolate youth; Mme. de Boutaric dying without arranging her future; the brilliant education at Saint Denis, rendered useless by her want of relations; her first attempt at a liberal career being so unhappily crushed that she could not obtain another; the necessity in which she had been—in which she still was—forced her to resort to her needle as the only means of living—or rather, to keep off starvation!

"This is frightful!" murmured Mme. d'Escloville, "and I have rarely seen a more fatal complication of evils—of *undeserved* misfortunes;" and she looked scrutinizingly at Jeanne, who, strong in her innocence, received her searching gaze unflinchingly.

"God," continued the noble woman, "sometimes sends us hard trials, but they do not last for ever, and they pre-

pare us for the better life. Have courage, my child."

"Courage does not fail me—it is only my strength, madame, which sometimes gives way."

Mme. d'Escloville was good—of a serious goodness that had nothing flighty in its character—and she must know a person thoroughly—but her affection once given, was never taken away.

"It would be a shame," said she, with warmth, "if a noble, honest, well-educated person like yourself could not obtain support from the most complete education that the State gives its best servants. I will not allow this! I will do all that is in my power for you."

"Ah, madame! how kind you are," said Jeanne, with her eyes full of tears.

"I wish to be, but it is not always easy," replied Mme. d'Escloville. "However, I will seek so well that I must find something. You will not object to give lessons to a young girl in a respectable family?"

"Object? Why, madame, it is what I desire above everything."

"Well, it will be my business to find you a good scholar. In the meantime, you must come see me, as your neighbor. We will talk, you can read to me, and the people you meet in my parlor may be useful to you. Let us understand each other. You can do many things for me. Before knowing you, I had a companion; she earned more by doing what I ask of you, than they give you for this dreadful sewing. Will you be kind enough to take her place? Do not refuse me, you proud little one! Besides, it is only temporary—we will soon do better for you."

Jeanne's only reply was to kiss her benefactress's hand.

Mme. d'Escloville's proposal had been made with such frank cordiality, that Jeanne could but accept it.

Nearly every day was now passed on the first floor of the house, and the atmosphere of affection, comfort and luxury soon completely restored her health.

As she was reading the paper one morning after breakfast, a servant announced a visitor. A middle-aged lady and a sweet young girl entered the parlor. They conversed. Jeanne took her part in the conversation with quiet modesty. While she talked, they listened. The elder lady seemed pleased, and Mme. d'Escloville said in a low tone to Jeanne:

"This young lady will be your pupil! What do you think of her!"

"She seems good and intelligent, and I feel as if I can love her a great deal, if she will love me but a little."

"Then you will both love each other, and the thing will work well."

Both parties refered to Mme. d'Escloville the price of the lessons, which she fixed at five francs an hour; and they arranged that Mlle. Hortense de Cerny should take five a week—a little more than a hundred francs a month. A hundred francs a month for a wise, economical girl like Mlle. Derville—a hundred francs a month! It was a little fortune.

Jeanne felt, during all the arrangements, a grateful and deep joy. The future shone in brighter colors, and her youth became more hopeful.

Mme. de Cerny lived in the Rue de la Santé, which is not exactly near the Rue de Clichy, as the young teacher had to cross nearly the three quarters of Paris; but on clear days the walk was very beneficial, and on rainy days she used the omnibus—that equipage of the poor. This regular exercise and fresh air restored her health, and the beautiful color once more to her cheeks.

It never rains but it pours. Jeanne's first scholar brought her another, who lived in the Invalides—so the greater part of her day was passed on the road. All this distraction was good for her—it prevented her from dwelling on the past, which still shadowed her existence. The remembrance of M. de Bois-Robert still haunted her, but she fought violently against the sad thought. Her love wound was now only a scar that time would entirely efface. To confess the truth, this love that had been so violent, was rather the capture of her youthful imagination than the free choice of a heart surrendering itself to the being chosen from all others.

Maxence had really, then, only been for her the first comer in her life—nothing more.

Under these circumstances, one can be cured—one is always cured.

CHAPTER XVII.

THIS employment gave Jeanne a new interest. She taught her scholars with affectionate solicitude. She loved them, and they adored her. She cultivated their sense of right, and their hearts, at the same time with their minds. It was a complete education they received from young and skilful hands. The pupils watched impatiently for their lessons; to work with her became a pleasure. All this rejoiced the parents.

At the end of two years of unceasing labor, Mlle. Derville had more pupils than she could take. She raised her price to ten francs a lesson. She registered herself. She moved from the fifth to the second floor, into a comfortable and elegant apartment, furnished with the perfect taste she always displayed. She enjoyed this commencement of luxury with a naive and childish happiness. Each object recalled some week or month of work, for most of them were presents from her grateful pupils, or ladies who felt their indebtedness. She could show to all with a just pride, these witnesses of an honest, laborious life. In such circumstances, material joys increase doubly the moral joys. Those who have only had the one trouble of being born, and who have always *been* rich instead of *becoming* so, can never know this *kind* of happiness.

I do not mean to say that Mlle. Derville had made a fortune. Fortunes are not soon made by giving lessons; but she was able to lay something aside for her old age. When Jeanne compared the present with the past, she thanked God with tears of love and gratitude. Gratitude was one of Jeanne's chief virtues. As her fortunes improved, she sought every occasion to show her gratitude to those friends who had stood by her in her hour of trial.

Aglaé Sorel and Rose dined with her nearly every Sunday, in company with those of their friends, who had aided, cared for, and loved her. She was now the benefactress. She introduced them into the houses of her friends. She made them profit by her connections; and by the noble, solid patronage that she obtained for them. She paid her debt a hundred fold. She was as proud of them as if they had been her own sisters; and rejoiced to witness their success, without a jealous reservation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AS soon as she was rich enough to engage a servant, Mlle. Derville tried to avoid the trouble of one of those Parisian domestics, so unfaithful and full of vices. She remembered that there was at the Rosery a noble, honest girl, who adored her; her dear Breton, so devoted to her father, so full of affection for herself. She settled Jacqueline in the Rue de Clichy, and she kept her house with order and economy. The robust country woman regretted, at first, the loss of the flowers, trees, and fresh air of the Rosery; she missed the sea also, with its murmuring waves, its squalls and its tempests.

But in Paris she had Jeanne, and Jeanne was worth all that—she was worth more. After Mlle. Derville had shown Jacqueline all Paris, she was forced to confess, that next to Avranches, it *was* the prettiest place she had ever seen. She was much frightened at the high prices of all the necessaries of life, and would have asked nothing better than to allow her mistress and herself to die of hunger, so as not to ruin her. Intelligent and sagacious, she soon learned the ins and outs of Parisian trade, and the ruses of skilful housekeepers. She kept Jeanne's house with regularity and order, and took good care of the young girl.

Gravis was not forgotten. Jeanne wrote him a charming letter, relating her past misfortunes and her present happiness, telling him, that in the depth of her misery she had thought of turning to him alone and offering him her hand, and that she had never forgotten his kindness, and now felt as if he ought to be the first informed of her good fortune and happiness.

The good notary had to wipe his spectacles several times while reading this not very lengthy epistle.

"Poor dear child, I would have rendered her very happy, if she would have allowed it." Gravis was sad—tears weighed heavily on him.

His daughter had married, leaving the house empty—the substitute had

captured the heart and "dot" of Rose-Celeste. Marriage had not softened this old maid; she would always be acrimonious, cold, and dry.

The ineffaceable impression Jeanne had made on the notary (notaries ought to be in parchment like their deeds), hindered Gravis from marrying the second time. He was sincerely rejoiced to hear of Jeanne's good fortune, for he had always feared for her.

Jeanne showed an earnest and deferential respect to Mme. d'Escloville, whose efficient protection, even more than what she had done, had saved her in her greatest need. Of all her friends, she cultivated her the most.

Jeanne's life was quiet, calm, almost happy. The remembrances of her misfortunes were less bitter; she felt now she was worth something better than M. de Bois-Robert. She felt that a man who could so quickly forget her, did not deserve her everlasting regrets. Since the day of their marriage she had never met himself nor his wife. She heard no more of the baron. He had not tried to see her again, which certainly showed good taste. There was a total eclipse of all the family. They had disappeared from her existence as the shooting stars vanish in the heavens.

After Mme. de l'Isle's cruel indifference, Jeanne thought it would be undignified to care about her. She therefore lived in an entirely new life, without any connection with the old.

The first person belonging to her old world that crossed Jeanne's path was, however, this same Madame de l'Isle, of whom she had so much to complain. Chance alone was the culprit.

It was on Sunday, whilst leaving mass, Jeanne was descending the steps of the peristyle of La Madeline, that fashionable church, as Constance came up. Jeanne had a fresh spring costume. March was precocious this year! March is as gallant a month as his patron. The women are the most charming, at this time, in Paris; they revive with the fine days.

Jeanne looked beautiful and happy in her becoming costume, as she slowly and gracefully descended the steps. Mme. de l'Isle loved happiness. If Jeanne had looked sad and not pretty, Constance would most probably have passed by without noticing her; but as it was, the woman of the world stopped first.

"Why, good-morning, dear charming one, I am delighted to meet you again! what has become of you for this perfect age?—you naughty forgetful one."

"Goodness! madame, I have become what I have been able—I have contended, I have worked, and for want of protectors I have protected myself."

"With merit like yours, one must always obtain their ends."

"One is never certain, even when they reach them."

"You are too modest, dear child; but your friends have more confidence in you than you have in yourself."

"This confidence, madame, encourages them as much as it honors me."

"But why have you not tried to see me?"

"And where could I have seen you, if you please?"

"At my own house, I suppose."

"Excuse me, but I thought you were all this time in the South."

Mme. de l'Isle understood the sarcasm of this reply.

"Indeed, you are mistaken," said she, pressing both Jeanne's hands; "I was with my mother, whose health caused me much justifiable anxiety, as I have since had the misfortune to lose her. When I returned to Paris I had a thousand sad things to which I was obliged to attend, and this made me forget your address. All this is true—say, am I forgiven?"

"Oh, the fault is so slight and the defence so skilful."

"Then give me your hand, let us speak of the future and forget the past."

Jeanne gave her hand to Mme. de l'Isle, who pressed it again with all the signs of lively affection, saying—

"We are in a public place—we have so much to say to each other. Let me see—where do you live?"

"If I tell you, you will forget."

"Tell me, nevertheless."

"Street de Clichy, No. 49."

"I will call for you at three o'clock to drive in the Bois. I am going to try a new pair of horses—a present from my husband. You will come with me; it will be a double fête."

Jeanne desired to decline, but Mme de l'Isle would not give her time.

"I will take no excuse; I will call for you at three."

"Strange woman!" murmured Jeanne, "not in reality wicked, but thoughtless. She is mistaken if she thinks we can visit; I have no time for worldly friends; but for once, I like very well to see if the arbutus is in flower; if the spring is advanced. She will speak of people of whom I seldom think, and who have entirely forgotten my existence. Hold! It seems as if that was nothing to me!"

Mme. de l'Isle was of a military punctuality, and arrived at the moment. Jeanne was ready waiting, when the double knock sounded at the door. Jacqueline opened it, and ran to Jeanne saying, "It is a beautiful woman, who asks for you!"

Jeanne had hardly ordered her to be shown up when Constance appeared, dressed most beautifully,

"How charming it is here!" said she, examining all Jeanne's pretty things like a May bug, turning her head from side to side, in a hurry to be off. "Very good! very good! truly very pretty; but let us go; I will come back again! You should have a little groom to announce your friends; it would not cost much, and it is a good thing for a female establishment. Where did you catch that big 'gen d'arme?'"

"In the salt water—under the Mount Saint Michel! She is, at first, rather a droll figure, but you soon get used to her appearance. She is an old servant of my father's—reliable, honest, and faithful."

"Keep her, then—she is a treasure! A black diamond, a fine pearl! but keep also the little groom! A negro, if you please—the color is nothing, only you must have one. One gets them as big as your fist. I could put mine in my pocket!"

"He would be well lodged! But you forget, dear madame, the difference in our destinies. You belong to the rich world, I to the poor. You only know the *elegancies*, luxuries, and pleasures of life; I only the work and the cares, which I accept without murmuring, but by which I obtain my living. My groom or my tiger would be very useful on the days I have the honor of receiving you! Would it not be very useless to keep one to open the door for my little scholars?"

"You are right," replied Madame de l'Isle, whose thoughts had already flown to some other object. "How bright the sun is. I am sure we will meet all Paris."

"All my Paris consists of a few pupils, and we will hardly meet them on the Bois. But I see you, dear madame. I am with you; this is all my Paris till to-morrow."

"I am not so amiable as this; but I love you enough to merit all these pretty things. We have taken a charming house in the street de la Pépinière; not very large, but beautifully arranged."

"I am sure of that, if it belongs to you."

"We receive a few—sometimes a great many. I have been in deep black for my mother, to whom I owe a great deal, for she adored me. But I have a few years of youth left, and I wish to enjoy them. We will have our soirées, like those we had at Maisons-Lafitte, and you will be their most beautiful ornament, darling!"

"You are too good; but this cannot be, for a thousand reasons—one is, I have nothing to wear."

"If you have no better reason—"

"Then my time is distributed among my pupils, so that very little remains to myself."

"And do you call this life?"

"I call that my life."

"We will change all this a little."

"Indeed, it is impossible. I go nowhere, and can only visit you on rare occasions."

"Well, we will see. I have a brilliant staff around me. I will order one of my aides-de-camp to carry you off. I have irresistible ones. See how beautifully my horses trot! M. de l'Isle has executed my wishes nobly."

Every one looked at the splendid turn out, and the beautiful women it contained.

The day was perfect! The Bois one mass of fashion, riches, and beauty. Two years sooner this would have been a dangerous spectacle for Jeanne. The scholar of Saint Denis, the friend of the Blanchelandes, then remembered too well her deceived hopes, her vanished dreams, and the comparison between what she was and what she saw, would be painful. But now the hour of peril

had passed; experience, so dearly bought, was useful. Foolish illusions could not influence her correct ideas. Her head, calm, cold, she carried higher than when she left the institution. She was under the dominion of good sense, and felt that henceforward nothing could lead her away. She had conquered herself for ever.

CHAPTER XIX.

JEANNE had only been in the Bois *once* during two years, and then she took her Bretonne, who wished to know if there were any trees in Paris; but she had never seen it in the midst of its worldly splendors.

Constance related all the fashionable gossip to Jeanne, pointing out the heroes and heroines of each story as they passed. Constance was a speaking gazette, whose malice was seasoned with sprightliness. Jeanne was interested in spite of herself; for, after all, she was not born to be a recluse, and her nature would show itself. After driving for some time, the hour of return arrived, and all turned towards Paris as if by the word of command.

"What is worth taking is worth keeping," said Constance. "I will keep you —I will not release you—you must dine with us — only four or five persons, counting my husband and myself—few enough. You need not dress; come just as you are; come see how we will all honor you. I will send you home this evening. In fact, you cannot say no."

"Then I must say yes."

"You must, indeed; my conscience pricks me a little on your account. It is true I did not know your address, but by searching I might have found it. You see I am sincere—I have been rather lukewarm in your service—I see my fault and repent."

"When I had so much need of aid," thought Jeanne.

"I do not pretend that the sin should be pardoned because I confess it; but you will see if I do not repair my fault."

"That is already done."

"Rely on me now—I can perhaps give you good advice. Will you be guided somewhat by your old friend?"

Jeanne nodded her head with a smile.

"As you are obliged to work, (your own words), I advise you to take pupils from the best and richest families only; they are more profitable and agreeable. Some happy, unexpected event—but a very probable one for you—may soon snatch you from this life of care, to give you the destiny you merit. There is something in me that tells me this."

"Madame, these are dangerous thoughts," said Jeanne; "I have indulged in them, but they cost too dear."

"You are right, Miss Wisdom! But on the real facts accept my counsel. Direct your instruction to the arts. You sing like an angel; you play like Chopin. Please forget a little history, geography and grammar; give music lessons and sing in the parlors. Leave the miserable position of instructress, rise to the rank of artist. With your great talents you will be the equal of the noblest and haughtiest. Singers are now the queens of the world—look at their marriages!"

"What you say is true, but it requires a great deal of talent to be an artist; and I cannot run the risk. I require something certain and positive; this is absolutely necessary; one day must provide for the next."

"You are right, I will not advise you to quit the substance for the shadow, but still think you can do both. Keep the best of your patrons and add some brilliant pupils, who will enable you to make your mark in the world, which is your destined place."

"Well, obtain me two such pupils, and I will try to do as you desire. Will this please you?"

"I am enchanted! but tell me, do you never see the Blanchelandes?"

This sudden remembrance embarrassed Mlle. Derville, who blushed and stammered as she replied: "It is long since I have heard of them."

"I believe your friendship was broken rather suddenly?"

"Very suddenly!"

"You speak strangely!" said Constance, fixing a penetrating look on Jeanne. "Will you let me be inquisitive?"

"As you please."

"Had Victorine's marriage anything to do with the estrangement?"

"Anything? Everything! I wish

tc tell you all. If the Count Robert had been master of his own actions, perhaps he would not have been in haste to fulfil the wishes of his family. I seemed the obstacle to these reasonable projects. I then did as any other delicate woman. I withdrew from their life, and Victorine has married the man I loved."

"I would not be in her place," said Mme. de l'Isle. "Any one who has loved you, will always love you. Indeed I pity both; but tell me the whole, for I feed on these little things, as a cat does on sugar and milk."

"There are no details. There is nothing to relate—I left—they got married—this is all."

"And have you never seen them since?"

"Never."

"How! never?"

"No; shortly after their marriage they travelled."

"This is the fashion now. It is necessary to enjoy the honeymoon on the highway."

"I think they went to Germany."

"Yes; I am told the journey was recommended by their relations. The husband needed distraction. Since their return, they do as all rich people; pass part of the year in Paris, and the rest in the country."

Jeanne listened silently to Constance—her heart beat quickly at times, but she soon recovered her self-command, and seemed as if she had never known Victorine de Blanchelande; never loved the Count Maxence de Bois-Robert.

"Tell me! be frank! what would you do if you met them?"

"Nothing, I hope! At any rate, I neither fear nor desire to do so."

"If it were me, I would be curious to see them and the baron."

"Oh, him indeed!"

"It seems that—"

"He is not worth speaking about!" said Jeanne, with a significant frown.

"Oh!" thought Mme. de l'Isle, "there is a secret history here, which this beautiful discreet one must tell me some day. I will let it pass now, it is too soon."

Constance met many friends as they returned, and was bowing continually from one side to the other. Many horsemen passed, and were astonished at not knowing the beauty by her side.

The young girl could not help a feeling of innocent vanity, on seeing the little success she obtained in her first reappearance in the fashionable world.

"Goodness!" said she, with ingenuous frankness; "will all this commence again." "All this," to use her words, which had been agreeable to Jeanne, "all *this*" was now a matter of indifference to her. "All this" was the trite attention men pay to pretty women. Jeanne was now above "all this," all such triumphs — vanity ended where dignity commenced.

Mme. de l'Isle conducted Mlle. Derville to her home, and was pleased to see her admire it. They had a family dinner; and she sent Jeanne home, after making her promise to call again.

CHAPTER XX.

MLLE. DERVILLE formed acquaintances with Constance's friends, but accepted very few invitations—work, and the duties of her profession, were her excuses.

Jeanne, by this course, soon became the rage. She had followed Mme. de l'Isle's counsel, she taught only music, she was now an artist. They registered their names in advance to obtain her instruction, that they paid more dearly for than you can imagine. She was surrounded by a prestige that is seldom obtained by a young girl. The greater part of her success was owing to Mme. de l'Isle, who had entered, though rather tardily, into her role of protectress to an interesting orphan, with all her energies.

The most beautiful stone, the richest diamond, the purest sapphire, the most sparkling ruby must be cut and carefully mounted to show their value and to display all their fire.

Constance showed forth with much skill all the merits of her young friend. Her superior education, her numerous talents, her distinction, her beauty, her birth and her misfortunes. Paris is peopled with the sheep of Panurge—when one jumps over all follow. They followed Mme. de l'Isle's lead, and

thought of Jeanne with her ideas. Jeanne's affairs looked well.

"My good Jacqueline," said Mlle. Derville to her faithful Bretonne, "if all goes on like this we can retire to the Rosery in a few years and live peaceably near those who sleep below."

"Hum! that will suit me very well! but I wish better things for you, Mlle. Jeanne—a good husband. I shall not feel satisfied till you have one. Until then I sleep with one eye opened."

But a husband to suit Mlle. Derville was a difficult thing to find. Men do not marry for love in these days, and nothing else would now satisfy Mlle. Derville.

Many admired her, and she could have recompensed them by an unalterable, unending devotion, but she had no dower!

Be frank, sir,—you, who read this—would you have married without a dower?

Jeanne's past experience had been very useful to her. She understood men, and did not expect them to marry. Jeanne worked hard, and her partial return to the gay world gave zest to all her duties. The scholars felt her joyousness. The human soul is a spring which must not always be stretched. The cord even of Apollo's bow must be relaxed from time to time.

One morning, the day after a fête, where she had met with much success—the success of a woman and the success of an artist—Jeanne received two lines from Mme. de l'Isle:

"Come to our house this evening; we will probably have some music, but I wish you—I order you—to be as beautiful as possible. This is such an easy thing for you to do, that I will not tell you why. CONSTANCE."

"I did not intend to go out this evening," thought Jeanne, "but since she desires it—we must do something for those who love us. I wonder if this beautiful lady really does care for me. A little, perhaps; at any rate she is very kind and tries to benefit me. She thinks too much of dress. I cannot employ 'Worth;' one of his dresses would swallow up my whole year's income. This proud Constance must condescend to receive me in a simple white dress. I will have my hair arranged to please her—this is all I can do."

When the evening arrived, Jeanne entered her friend's saloon alone, as usual; she preferred the evenings spent there, for all were so kind to her, and she felt as if she was loved by them. She was slightly curious, in her inmost soul, to know why Constance particularly desired her presence—but she would not ask.

Constance was waiting to receive her, and advanced to meet her with a shade of confusion on her brow.

"Good evening, White Rose," said she, holding out her hand, "I see you have obeyed my commands—you are as beautiful as an angel! Does your heart beat quickly?"

"With pleasure! dear madame, when I see you."

"Oh! you are too sweet."

"It does not beat more quickly this evening than usual."

"I love to see you so brave."

"What bravery can I need in your house?"

"To be frank with you, Jeanne, have you the courage to meet suddenly some old acquaintances?"

"If you had doubted me, I do not suppose you would have run the risk of my meeting them."

"Well said, my valiant friend! Know then, that the trinity of Blanchelandes, not to forget the Count de Bois-Robert, are now in the large saloon."

This was very unexpected news to Jeanne Derville, and she could not hinder a slight feeling of emotion.

"This is not right," said she, to her friend; "you have deceived me—you ought to have told me before."

"And if I had, you would have refused to come."

"I am not so sure of that; but I would have consulted my strength."

"This would have been useless—I answer for you; but believe me, little one, until you have conquered this last assault, you cannot be sure of yourself. You do not know your strength, or what you can accomplish. This will prove it."

"Well, to the proof then," replied Jeanne, who felt her calmness and strength return.

M. de l'Isle approached, and offered his arm to lead her into the next room.

Her first glance fell on Victorine, the

Countess of Bois-Robert, seated opposite the door, alongside of her mother, Mme. de Blanchelande, who had now the appearance of a robust lady verging on old age. Victorine, on the contrary, had become as thin since her marriage as her mother had increased in size. She had lost the freshness of her youth, which was her greatest charm. Truly beautiful women, with regular features, can alone triumph over the changes of sickness and health, becoming more and more like the ancient marble statues, which retain their radiant serenity impervious to all catastrophes. While those who have only the "Beauté du diable," lose theirs at the first trial.

Victorine was a proof of this remark; she looked sad and thin—you rather pitiéd her. Jeanne formed a striking contrast. Proud, elegant, radiant, conscious of the superiority education had added to her precious gifts of nature, the former scholar of St. Denis enjoyed, at this moment, a brilliant revenge for the indignities shown to her while at Blanchelande. Scarcely had she made her appearance in the saloon, when she was eagerly surrounded by those who ever formed her little court—ever desirous of obtaining a first quadrille or waltz. She accepted—she refused—she made engagements with the laughing coquetry of a young queen, who sees loving subjects in all the men. Leaning on M. de l'Isle's arm, she crossed the saloon, bowing with perfect equality and grace to the ladies she passed.

"Where do you wish to go?" said her guide. "You know this is the dancing-room."

"Into the other apartment," said Jeanne, who had not yet seen all whom she expected to meet.

She entered a boudoir, called the "Chinese saloon" from its decorations. The Baron de Blanchelande was playing whist at a table. The lively Edward seemed at last to have abdicated the sceptre of man of the world, for that of one of its noble fathers. But the unexpected appearance of Jeanne seemed to *him* to take twenty years from his life, and to his partner to add fifty years to it, for he played so badly, in the hopes of being at leisure, that the game was soon lost. Throwing some louis on the table, he arose, and approached Mlle. Derville. His old recollections were so vivid, that he saluted her with as much embarrassment as if he had just left college.

Mlle. Derville bowed slightly, with great indifference, as if to keep the man at a distance. M. de l'Isle placed a chair for her, and returned to the dancing-room. Jeanne seated herself near a lady friend, turning her back on Victorine's father, and was soon the centre of a joyous group. Kept at a distance by Jeanne's manner, and not knowing any of those who surrounded her, the baron remained outside of the circle, watching and listening. Mlle. Derville did not seem to notice his existence; she was so gay and happy that nothing seemed as if it could disturb her.

The ball commenced, and Jeanne was soon led from her quiet corner. She danced all the time, and was the acknowledged queen of her friend's soirée. She enjoyed her triumph with a modest assurance, as if she was perfectly accustomed, and therefore slightly indifferent to her success.

At last, after dancing a Mazourka with a secretary of state, who was very intimate at Mme. de l'Isle's, and whose conversation she enjoyed, she said: "Let us walk round the rooms, and see all the celebrities. My friend invited me to spend a very sociable evening, and it is a grand fête."

"What else could you expect? The beautiful Constance has five or six hundred friends, and two thousand acquaintances. But who do you wish to see?"

"Every one—no one in particular."

Jeanne was still talking, when she suddenly found herself in front of Maxence de Bois-Robert. A sudden pain shot through the depths of her soul. Her color went and came. She soon regained her calmness, and not a shadow passed over her marble countenance. Nor did the young man on whose arm she leaned, feel her tremble in the least.

As for the Count de Bois-Robert, he was so totally unprepared for Jeanne's appearance that he backed into the boudoir Jeanne was entering. Jeanne and Maxence—their meeting was now inevitable. No matter how much embar-

rassed a man of the world may be by certain events, he quickly recovers himself, and coolly faces the most unforeseen circumstances. Maxence would have given much to have been a hundred miles from Paris at this moment; for Mlle. Derville was the last person he wished to see in the same room with his wife. But he hid his annoyance, and saluted the young lady as if he had seen her the night before. An acute observer would have noticed their agitation, and seen how curiously they secretly scrutinized each other. In these contests that are fought in a boudoir or saloon, the woman's tactics are greater than the man's power. She nearly always comes off with the honors of war. Whilst Maxence was uncertain in his movements, Jeanne with a prompt, frank, loyal manner, which denied all remembrances of the past, and distinctly settled the future, addressed him in these words—

"Good evening, count, I am glad to see you again. You have taken several journeys since we last met. I hope they have been agreeable. I am told you are married to my old friend Mlle. de Blanchelande. I thought I saw her just now in the dancing-room."

All this was said in a tone and manner that stupefied Maxence. The young lady he had formerly known was a little timid scholar, blushing at every word; beautiful in her natural grace, and ignorant of herself. The one he now saw, in one of the most elegant saloons of Paris, seemed radiant with beauty and intelligence, and the self-reliance which is gained by a noble contest and the consciousness of duty each day accomplished.

When Maxence first met Jeanne on that lovely autumn morning, reading in the park of Blanchelande, she was on the threshold of life, fearing to face her destiny, which threatened only misfortunes.

He saw her now, returning from the contest victorious, mistress of circumstances, mistress of herself, and he felt she was capable of ruling over all such as he was himself by her superior nature.

Whilst M. de Bois-Robert stammered an embarrassed reply, Jeanne said with as much ease as if she had been receiving an ordinary acquaintance in her own house, "Will you sit down?" and pointed to a chair near the fire-place, as if she were doing the honors of the mansion.

He seated himself opposite to her like a culprit before his judge.

"Monsieur de Verne, I will not force your feet to remain quiet the rest of the evening, M. de Bois-Robert will lead me back to my place."

M. de Verne understood her, and withdrew. Maxence and Jeanne were left alone.

When two people love each other the first moment they are alone is delicious; but if they no longer love it is painful and embarrassing—even agonizing in some cases.

Without a word being spoken, the mere fact of being tête-à-tête with each other recalled the past, so bitter, so cruel for Mlle. Derville, so shameful for M. de Bois-Robert. They both felt it was impossible to avoid the subject.

"Mademoiselle or madame?" asked the count, who knew nothing of Jeanne's history.

"I am not married," said Jeanne, with stern dignity. "I have kept my faith."

"And I have broken mine!" replied the count, lowering his head. "I have apparently wronged you, mademoiselle!"

"Apparently!" said Jeanne, with a singularly bitter smile. "Thus Mademoiselle de Blanchelande is only an appearance?"

"Oh! don't let us dispute about words! You are quicker than I am. I yield in advance."

"I did not select the words, sir; I employed those you used yourself. You have done me the honor to state that you have only apparently wronged me."

"If you would be kind enough to listen to me——"

"It seems to me I have been doing nothing else for some time."

"If you could only realize my true position! What between my mother and the Blanchelandes, it was frightful!"

"Do you think mine was any better?"

"I was ignorant of yours."

"And you were unmindful of me, above all others?"

"I do not say so."

"I do, though."

"Ah, mademoiselle, you are without pity."

"Do you think, sir, that I have much cause to feel for you?"

"No, you have the wrongs and justice on your side, I hasten to acknowledge. But if you are so immovable, I can never finish all I have to say."

"You can, however, continue. After what I have heard, I can listen to all the rest."

Victorine's husband still felt Jeanne's fascinations, and liked to accuse himself to her, in the hopes that she would accept some of his excuses.

He continued: "I did not consent to marry Mlle. de Blanchelande until they threatened to keep me in Italy. If I staid in Italy I would lose you as certainly as if I married. My mother is dead, now; I will not follow her with useless recriminations; but she always exercised an influence over my youth that I never dreamed of resisting. You were the subject of my first contest with her. She brought all her forces to bear. She insinuated many things against you that were confirmed in my eyes by the fatal meeting at Blanchelande. In my despair I consented. Now you know all."

"Yes, I know all," replied Jeanne, raising her head. "Yes, I know all. But you, sir, know nothing! Whilst you left me to hopelessness and despair—whilst you disowned me—all the constancy, devotion, and loyalty of a woman's heart was given to you. I believed, I hoped, I loved, I endured with courage the hardest trials. I waited for you, firmly and constantly looking to the promised future, strengthening myself by the thought of your love. I fought a harder fight than yours; one against poverty, sickness, isolation, and hunger. Whilst you passed your honeymoon on the Rhine, I was dying of sorrow, misery, and despair in a garret, where I received as a last outrage the obsessions of your father-in-law. It is my turn now, sir, to say you know all. You know your life and mine; compare and judge them!"

"And so you waited for me?"

"Did I not pledge myself to you?"

"Ah! If I had only believed that! nothing could have prevailed against my love!"

"Yes, I waited for you? I expected you. Notwithstanding the extraordinary silence that followed your departure; not withstanding the obstacles that seemed to increase each moment between us; yes, notwithstanding all, I waited for you. Oh! if your promises made at Blanchelande had been sincere; if you had been as firm in your resolutions as myself; if at any cost you had remained true to your plighted faith, the world might have separated us for a time, but it could not have hindered us meeting some day—and for ever! For nothing, nothing, I assure you, could have made me break my sacred vows; and, fool as I was, I should not have thought my happiness too dearly bought."

"And I have lost all this—all this by my own fault!" were Maxence's bitter reflections.

He looked at Jeanne in the looking-glass. Her emotions had heightened and given an indefinable charm to her beauty—she would have seemed fascinating to a careless observer, how much more then to the man who had loved and who loved her still!

The music sounded sweetly from the adjoining room.

"Oh! how miserable I am," said Maxence, "how I have fallen into their snares—no, I feel you can never forgive me, mademoiselle. I believed—I was made to believe — this did it all! I swear to you, Jeanne, this is what ruined me! They were so skilful in their tactics. And then — I tell you now the last thing — that meeting of you and him in a carriage, as I was on my way to see you — oh! that did it all."

"Indeed! what did you then believe?" said Jeanne in a quiet, compressed tone.

"Well!" said he, trying to keep back the harsh words that would come in spite of himself, "I believed that you—that M. de Blanchelande—"

He dared not continue, and he looked at Mlle. Derville.

Jeanne was now whiter than her dress; if she had not veiled her eyes under their large lids, Maxence would have been frightened at their dark flashes of lightning.

"So! you believed," said she at last, keeping her eyes still lowered, "you

believed that I, my father's daughter—I, who have suffered so much—even hunger itself—to be able, sir, to walk before you with a high head — that I should have been, for money, the mistress of an old roué — and that, too, when I loved you! Behold! Count de Bois-Robert, I condemn you to the recollection of what you have just said —I wish you no other revenge or punishment!"

And without another word, beautiful as a statue, with a proud, majestic gesture that a sculptor would have immortalized as a specimen of human passions, without deigning to honor, even with a look, the petrified Maxence, who seemed pinned to the earth, she advanced to the door. On the threshold, she was stopped by the entrance of the Baron de Blanchelande.

"Ah! it is you, sir," said Jeanne, moving to let him pass; "come in, I pray you! you are wanted. Come reassure your son-in-law—who accuses me of having been your mistress."

The baron had seen Jeanne enter the boudoir on the arm of a handsome young man, and seized with jealousy had followed her. Heaven had punished the baron for his inordinate lust of women by causing his passions to increase as his advanced age rendered his success almost hopeless. He had never forgotten Jeanne. Absence had increased his feelings, and since he had seen her so ill in the miserable garret, a prey to all the horrors of sickness and poverty, abandoned to the care of that frightful "Megœra," contending against delirium and death, he had the sad scene always in his mind, forming a striking contrast to the bright and joyous picture of the two girls supping with him in the English coffee house, the night they left Saint Denis. He had thought of her lately only as a prey to misery and want! and he found her opposite to him, a perfect woman of the world, living an apparently happy life, and enjoying all the delights of fortune. Perhaps she owed them to another! Perhaps she had gained them herself! What had happened to Mlle. Derville to cause this transformation? He did not know, and he dared not ask; but he thought by watching her unobserved he could find out.

Constance unfortunately killed this fine project, and accidentally or maliciously she took his arm and detained him a little while by her side. Some fetters cannot be broken; nothing is stronger than a thread of silk.

He followed Jeanne as soon as he was free, and presented himself at this inopportune moment at the door of the boudoir, already occupied by the Count de Bois-Robert and Mlle. Derville.

His son-in-law was the last person he desired to see near the young girl, for he felt he had too good cause to be jealous of him. He was hesitating whether to advance or retire, when Jeanne thus indignantly and openly apostrophized him.

"Come then, sir; come re-assure your son-in-law, who accuses me with having been your mistress!" and without waiting for the baron's reply, Mlle. Derville left the boudoir in the possession of the two men who loved her, and therefore detested each other.

"She seems in a furious mood!" said M. de Blanchelande to Maxence. "What have you said to her?"

"We spoke of you!" replied Bois-Robert.

"I am sorry for that, for the conversation could not have been agreeable, judging by her expression of face."

"She had been recalling some painful remembrances."

"And she has chosen you for her confidante?"

"She has not chosen me—she found me. She has given me no news. What she believed she revealed to me I have known for a long time."

But feeling that all this discussion with his father-in-law was useless and irritating, Maxence arose and left without another word.

The first thing he saw in the ballroom was Jeanne, dancing in the same quadrille, opposite to his wife. Chance is malicious sometimes. Jeanne had not sought the place, and Victorine had not dared to avoid it. The thing could not have been helped without the risk of a disturbance. This, a woman of the world never permits under any circumstances.

Victorine's marriage was contracted under unfavourable circumstances, and she could not expect to find fireside hap-

piness. Mlle. de Blanchelande had felt her pride wounded at the idea that a young girl, her inferior in rank and fortune, could vie with her for a husband. Anger and pride had crushed all other sentiments. She had wished to conquer this audacious rival; and, thanks to a thousand favorable circumstances, aided by perfidious chances, the rich heiress had defeated the poor orphan. This success, though it flattered her vanity, did not satisfy her hopes. She was punished by the knowledge that the image of another came between her husband and herself. She must renounce all the ideas and joys of a marriage for love. This grieved her at first, but she found consolation in her house and surroundings, and felt that, after all, she only followed the common routine. If this fact did not console her, it helped her to be resigned.

But when she suddenly found herself opposite Jeanne, and compared herself with her old friend, she understood her just value, and regretted that she had not before seen the danger to which her husband would be exposed. She now exaggerated the peril; women always go from one extreme to another. At any rate it seemed impossible that if Maxence had ever loved Mlle. Derville, that he should now ever cease to love her. These not particularly joyous reflections threw a shade over the brow of the young countess and gave her a sad air, which heightened still more Jeanne's superior brightness and impassible serenity.

Maxence remained leaning against a door, heedless of the malicious remarks of those around, absorbed in watching and comparing the two women, between whom he had hesitated only to choose so badly, and compared secretly his destiny as it was, with what it might have been.

Jeanne, calm and magnificent, followed the figures of the quadrille, scarcely touching the ends of Victorine's gloved fingers, without trying to meet her looks. In the intervals of the dance she received the homage of a young and brilliant Swedish diplomat. At eleven o'clock there was an interval of music. Mme. de l'Isle, wishing doubtlessly this evening to display all Jeanne's brilliancy, and thus enable her to revenge the past, conducted Jeanne to the piano, and playing the accompaniment herself, implored her to sing. Jeanne chose that most moving and pathetic of modern inspirations, the "Romance of Saul," where Rossini's genius has condensed in a few notes so many sobs, so many tears. Jeanne had an excellent taste and touch, obtained from the best masters by hard study. She had also an exquisite feeling, and the gift of communicating her emotions to others. Then she was extremely beautiful while singing, which added the seduction of the eyes to that of the ears, and showed in her expressive countenance the sentiments with which the artist had penetrated her soul by these melodious sounds. Nervously excited, understanding that she was now fighting a true battle, from which she must come out victorious, she surpassed herself. Neither Shakspeare nor Rossini could ever have dreamed of a more touching Desdemona. She had also a success that singers rarely obtain in the world where the usages of society freeze everything. She was applauded, overwhelmed by the general enthusiasm. But satisfied with having obtained the triumph, disdaining to enjoy it, she furtively pressed Mme. de l'Isle's hand, saying—

"You know I am like Cinderella, I must leave before twelve, under penalty of losing my slipper, and as there is no Prince Charmant to bring it back to me—Adieu, and many thanks! I am going home."

"Without your supper?"

"Without supper!"

"Are you satisfied, now?"

"And you?"

"Delighted."

"I am also, then."

She disappeared whilst they still applauded her.

"Thus, is all finished," thought she as she sank back in the carriage. "I love no more! My heart is dead; farewell to my youth!"

CHAPTER XXI.

IF this evening had shown Mlle. Derville what she could do when she tried, it also exhibited to her the unfathomable vacancy in her soul. This second stage seemed to her worse than

the first, and she said to herself it was better to suffer by love than to live without it.

Jeanne for two years had been so occupied with the trying contest of life, that she had not had time to be unhappy. She now reviewed her whole past, coldly, calmly, and saw herself as she was.

She could by her energy and perseverance feel certain of her material existence. But this was not enough.

Woman does not feed on bread alone, any more than man; she has higher and nobler wants; she needs affection, tenderness and love. And Jeanne loved no one—and no one loved her—and still, her young blood boiled in her, and the vigor of her twenty years mounted to her brain, with its desires and troubles. She asked herself if such a slight result was worth so much trouble; if she had done well. What would be left to her of all these parlor triumphs, of which she was often so proud? Where so many exertions would lead her, and of what use it was to march all the time, if the end was never to be reached?

Her lessons could not be put off, and as she was expected at given hours in the four corners of Paris, to teach scholars, more or less bright, history, geography and rhetoric (for the young ladies learn rhetoric now-a-days, as well or better than ourselves), she was happily taken off from her own sad thoughts.

She must besides always appear calm and smiling to her pupils. A teacher is a woman, she may have a heart and a soul; she may have internal tempests, like the great lakes; she may yield to the dominion of passion, provided there is no external sign. The young souls confided to her care, must not suspect such secret and terrible things. The storm may grumble within, but it must never thunder.

Jeanne knew and did not forget all this. The life to which circumstances had condemned her seemed sweet to her while fulfilling its requirements.

The day after the soirée at Mme. de l'Isle's, she gave her usual lessons, and felt much better when she returned home in the evening.

She had not taken off her hat and gloves when Constance knocked at the door.

"My dear little one," said she, throwing her arms round Jeanne's neck, "I must kiss you."

"I wish nothing better," said Jeanne, offering both cheeks.

"You are an accomplished creature, just perfect, and I am proud and happy of being your friend," said she, in a dithyrambic tone.

"Ah! dear madam, behold a declaration of facts that my modesty forces me to condemn as too flattering. Spare me, if you please."

"It is only too true, nevertheless; your conduct last evening was sublime. I admired you."

"Then it seems I am simply sublime without any doubt of it."

"This is the best solution; but how did you keep so completely mistress of yourself? What power enabled you to control yourself so entirely?"

"I do not deserve much praise for that. I have naturally a great deal of self-control."

"I know that well. You have a heart of stone. But still before one you have loved, and whom perhaps you still love a little—"

Constance paused, as if afraid to say any more.

Mlle. Derville silently shrugged her shoulders.

"Thus it is well ended; entirely ended," continued Mme. de l'Isle.

"Entirely."

"Be frank with me; what did you feel when you met him last evening?"

"A little pity, perhaps."

"He did in truth cut a sad figure. And when you met the baron—"

"Some scorn."

"You are hard."

"Only just. But let him alone; he ought to be forgotten as among the invalids in the hospital."

"Naughty girl! And what of Victorine?"

"As for Victorine, I saw her last evening; but she is no longer an acquaintance of mine. She has betrayed our friendship—the friendship which was for so long the most intense feeling of my life—and of hers. She has humiliated my poverty, that she was more conscious of than any one. She has made me feel cruelly the difference in our positions; she has used every en-

deavor to win from me the man I loved, and who loved me. You will not require me, I suppose, to throw my arms around her neck?"

"No—but what a revenge you have taken!"

"Do you think so?"

"You have crushed her!"

"Barely grazed her. Ah! if I had been really as cruel and unforgiving as many would have been in my place, I need only to have taken Maxence's arm and led him in my suite across the saloon. A word, a look, a gesture, and again he would have been a slave at my feet, as he was formerly, and I would have condemned her to see the triumph I had achieved by the public devotion of her husband, who does not love her, and has never loved her."

"Yes, indeed! you might have done all this; and you refrained."

"It is a moderation that deserves no praise. I have such a profound contempt for all that is only vanity."

"And the baroness?"

"She is Victorine's mother—she is nothing to me."

"Thus, my beautiful angel, all is settled up with these people?"

"As if I had never known them," replied Jeanne, in a clear, decided tone, that showed the truth of what she said.

"Well, darling, since this is the case—and with a woman like yourself there is no other course—you must now take a determined stand."

"I! And what stand do you wish me to take?"

"You must get married."

"What! My goodness! To-day, or to-morrow? You will not let me have time to wear mourning."

"Indeed I will, but on condition that you wear rose color. It is a very becoming color to you."

"A court mourning, it seems! But whom do you wish me to marry?"

"Three individuals."

"All at once? I think I should be rung for this. But how happy my poor Bretonne would be. She has passed her life burning tapers in all the chapels, that the Holy Virgin might grant that I should not be condemned to dress St. Catharine's hair."

"You can reassure her from me, that the suitors will not be wanting. I am not in fun. Between ourselves, I know three of them."

"Alas! if of the three I can love only one—or two!"

"Be serious, little miss. You know that marriage is the most serious of all foolish things."

"Or the most foolish of all serious things."

"As you please! But here is my list. I have not arranged them in the order of merit, but of the time of the application of candidates."

"To the oldest! then, as my poor father used to say."

"Very well! But of three candidates, there is always a choice."

"Yes—the lucky one."

"Which he is, depends on yourself. But listen, you gabbler."

"I am dumb."

"First, there is M. de Roselene."

"The Counsellor of State?"

"Himself. He has a good name—a fine position."

"And a good age!"

"Goodness! only forty-eight! no more."

"You do not think that enough? Well, then, add his nursing months!"

"That does not count; besides, he is well preserved."

"In vinegar—too sharp for me!"

"Let us go on; I see the Counsellor of State has not the least chance."

"Very little, indeed."

"I scratch him off."

"Let us pass to number two."

"You danced with number two last evening—it is little Paul Blenheim."

"The son of the stockbroker?"

"Yes; he is young enough to suit you, I imagine."

"Too young! I would seem like his old woman!"

"Yes, perhaps, if you were not Jeanne Derville."

"Paul Blenheim? I should never have supposed he would have thought of such a thing,"

"I am not obliged to be as modest as yourself, and I confess I am not surprised that he should have noticed and appreciated you. He only proves he is a man of taste."

"I believe, indeed, that he has many good *tastes*," replied Jeanne, with an accent on the plural of the last word—

referring maliciously to certain well-known affairs in the young man's life.

"Well, my beautiful darling, do you hope to marry at Nanterre?"

"Neither at Nanterre nor at Bréda."

"Youth will be youth—the worst youths make the best husbands."

"It is a great risk."

"Is not marriage always a lottery?"

"Yes, there are only a few winning numbers. But, seriously, your M. Blenheim has never courted me—and his declaration comes like a bomb-shell."

"Last evening lighted the powder. You know, at any rate, he is rich."

"Fortune of trade! But a colonel's daughter, who has only five hundred francs a year, ought not to be very particular about the details."

"Paul is a pretty young fellow."

"I know his moustache is irresistible. But do you not know a little story that M. de l'Isle revealed to me?"

"An indiscretion of my husband's—no, I cannot conceive."

"Well, then, your white blackbird is provided with—I believe this is what they call it—is provided with a 'judicial adviser.'"

"This is only a circumstance—nearly all men have one."

"So much the worse for them; but I prefer that my husband shall have none."

"Poor Paul! The women have ruined him—a woman could save him."

"Let us see number three," said Jeanne, shaking her head.

"I wish to, but you are not very encouraging."

"I am sincere."

"Well, then, my number three is M. Julien d'Avenay!"

At this name, Jeanne looked at Mme. de l'Isle with bright, inquiring eyes.

"Is it really true that M. Julien d'Avenay has asked me to marry him?"

"Perfectly true, or I would not tell you!"

"Well, I am astonished."

"It is only two hours since he was in my parlor, imploring me to solicit your hand for him."

"He is not only a distinguished artist, but a very superior man."

"I think of him as you do; he is one of our most skilful sculptors. His place is marked in the Institute—"

"Without counting the one he occupies so well in the boudoir of the Marquise Stranieri," replied Jeanne, in an abrupt, sharp, cutting tone, which contrasted strangely with her usual sweetness.

This was enough to satisfy Mme. de de l'Isle that Jeanne was perfectly familiar with an adventure in M. Julien d'Avenay's life which had made scandal enough in the world.

"Ah, my poor little one! if you must marry some one who has never looked at any woman but yourself, I give it up. The species is very rare. You must order one made."

"Do not be annoyed, dear friend," replied Jeanne, with a sweet shade of melancholy. "I am no longer a young girl; I know what we can expect and ask of men; but after such a long and public liaison between the Marchioness and M. d'Avenay, think in what a situation his wife would be placed. I know that it would worry me all the time if I was his wife."

"What an exaggeration!"

"No, I do not exaggerate! Understand what I mean: All the words of love he addressed to me I should think had been said to another—a woman I know; I should probably meet her every evening in society, for your Italian is always in Paris; and though everything should be broken off between them, and he should not go to her house, he certainly does not shun her. I understand he cannot shun her. He speaks to her. Listen then: I assure you I should feel less afraid of M. Paul Blenheim's hundred mistresses than of this only one of M. Julien d'Avenay!"

"You might well be," thought Mme. de l'Isle, who did not reply.

"When a person has given so much to one woman," continued Jeanne, "there is nothing left to offer to another."

"You see he has though, since Julien wishes to marry."

"He perhaps wishes to do so—but whether he can or ought is a different affair—he has a chain around his neck."

"The chain is broken."

"Is there not a place," said Jeanne, pensively, "is there not a place, somewhere on the coast of Cayenne, where they transport the condemned, and where they still keep those whose time has not

expired? There ought to be one for love criminals—he ought not to be permitted to wander free in the society of honest defenceless women."

"Oh, Jeanne! dear Jeanne! what is the matter with you? You are so cruel to-day."

Jeanne continued, without replying: "Do you not see how unjust our lot is? A pure young girl has guarded herself as well as she was able; she has watched over her heart—over her mind—over her slightest thought, to give herself to a man—and in exchange for this perfect gift of herself, this man gives her the remains of a life engrossed by another—what that other has left—what she did not want. And you think all that right, dear madame?"

"No; I think it terrible! But how can it be helped, my dear little one? Life is life, and we cannot alter it. Later, when you have had more experience, you will know that perfect justice does not exist in this world. Wise changes, reciprocal concessions, are imperatively necessary in social existence, and we set at naught the essential conditions of our fate, by holding so obstinately to our rights."

"This is possible, dear friend; but you know how true I am—there are sacrifices beyond my strength, that I cannot make! Pardon me, but do not ask me to attempt them."

"Do you know what all this proves?" said Constance, taking Jeanne's hand, and drying a tear that ran down her burning cheek.

"No, madame, I do not."

"It proves that you are not as insensible to the merits of M. d'Avenay as you desire to appear."

"Ah! madam, if this is so, I assure you, I am not aware of it, and do not wish to be so. A man who is not free, ceases to be a man to me. You see perfectly well, that it is impossible for me to think of this one."

"Is this your final determination?"

"It is."

"Well," said Constance, rising, "diplomacy is not my forte, my embassy is unsuccessful. I believe the only thing left for me to do, is to join your faithful Bretonne in lighting tapers on the altars of all the marrying saints. After all—is marriage a blessing! One never can tell. Farewell, naughty one, may you have all the blessings that I desire for you."

Madame de l'Isle left, after kissing Jeanne on her wet eyes.

"They have vowed never to leave me at peace," said Jeanne when she was alone. "Cannot the world forget those by whom it is so easily forgotten?"

"Mademoiselle, dinner is ready," said the faithful Jacqueline.

Jeanne sat down to her lonely dinner, and to the great despair of Jacqueline scarcely touched a morsel; returning to her own room as soon as possible.

"Am I indeed wrong!" she asked herself earnestly. "Is it possible Constance is right? Have I become foolish now, wishing for impossibilities, devoted to chimeras? Let it alone—it is a disease. I am passing a crisis—but it is more the fault of others than of myself. As soon as I commence to breathe freely, they hunt me as for pleasure. Every one is in league against my peace. Peace! all I now desire."

CHAPTER XXII.

NOTWITHSTANDING her continued and reiterated successes, Jeanne resolutely persevered in her life of toil, following the advice of Mme. de l'Isle, and devoting a greater portion of her time to artistic teaching. She hoped by this means to soon reach the height of her ambition. The rude trials she had experienced had improved her talents. Talent does not need happiness—it often thrives best in adversity.

Mlle. Derville would not meet M. de Bois-Robert again, as the family De Blanchelande always left Paris at a certain time for Sologne, and that time had now arrived. The baron, who was too old to enjoy the country, usually remained in Paris. He had a double motive for his sojourn at present. When his family had gone, he left his grand apartments in the Rue de Grammont, and took rooms in a little hotel near Jeanne's house. He soon, by means of the irresistible argument of silver, became perfectly *au fait* as to all Jeanne's movements. He knew her hours for leaving and returning home, where her scholars lived, and the time and length

of the various lessons. Armed with this precious intelligence, he commenced a formidable campaign against her. Jeanne could go nowhere without being certain of meeting him. If she went on foot he followed at a pretended respectful distance, without positively compromising her. She could see how engrossed he was with her manners and actions. The baron also knew the particular stages she must take, and waited at the different offices, grumbling if she was late, getting in sometimes first, so that he was at home when she arrived.

Jeanne could not understand all this, and treated him with contemptuous scorn. Her aversion to him was so great that she would not have the slightest communication with him; for all was at an end between them for ever!

Once or twice, early in the morning, or late in the evening, he had tried to speak to her, but Jeanne's flashing look prevented him from renewing the attempt. He hoped that correspondence would succeed better. Some men write better than they talk, and are naturally tempted to misuse the epistolary languages—M. de Blanchelande composed, therefore, a most voluminous epistle, which was eloquent because it came from the heart. He found words that might have moved Jeanne's heart if she had read them, but she did not read them. He spoke to her of his soul, but she did not listen—he related the injuries he had done her, he tried to find an excuse for them in his unconquerable passion, foolish doubtlessly, but that she must pardon on account of its great strength—he still loved Mlle. Derville, but now only as he should love her—with parental affection. He ended by imploring her, that as she had been his daughter's best friend, she would grant him one last interview—that he might hear one merciful word from her, telling him she would forget the past.

This was all he could now hope for: he would then rid her for ever of his importunate presence. The baron read his epistle, thought it so fine that it would be impossible for Jeanne to remain any longer so implacable.

He carried the little piece of eloquence himself to the young girl's house—fearing, as lovers are so disposed to do, that *their* letters confided to other hands, will not reach their destination.

Mlle. Derville received very few letters; usually a few lines from a pupil about the lesson-hour. The light paper was scarcely perceived under the envelope. The baron's long phrases had more volume and weight. Jeanne recognised the well-known handwriting of the baron that she had so often seen on Victorine's letters, before breaking the seal.

"Ah!" said she, frowning, "how daring he becomes—he needs a lesson. Well, he shall have one."

After making this resolve, she put the letter in her pocket, waiting an opportunity to return it to its author. She had not long to wait.

The next morning, M. de Blanchelande, calculating on his fine writing, was accidentally on Jeanne's path, near the solitary heights of the Luxembourg. As soon as he saw her, he looked inquiringly at her, and hastening his steps, soon shortened the distance between them.

"Is it possible he intends speaking to me here, in the public street?" thought Mlle. Derville. And to prevent this great piece of audacity, looking round to see that she was unobserved, she threw the letter at the baron's feet, without even looking at him.

"Ah! this is too bad!" murmured M. de Blanchelande, picking up piteously his unfortunate production. But anger and indignation soon brought back his energy, and looking after Jeanne, who did not even turn her head,

"I will revenge myself!" said he, with a threatening gesture.

Satisfied with this execution, cruel at least in form, but which did not seem too severe for her fierce indignation, Jeanne continued her walk as perfectly indifferent to the person she had just made her mortal enemy, as if he no longer existed. "He must be singularly obstinate if this does not relieve me from him entirely."

CHAPTER XXIII.

ALL the circumstances seemed to give good grounds for the young girl's hopes. A month passed by, and she heard nothing of the baron. During this month several things took place, which had great influence upon the destiny of our heroine.

One evening, as she sat quietly playing the piano, after dinner, her bell rang violently.

Jacqueline, who was just going out, opened the door for the stranger who seemed in such haste.

"I have a message for Mlle. Derville from one of her scholars."

"Enter, sir, if you please. I will tell mademoiselle." While speaking she showed the stranger into the dining-room, which Jeanne used as an anteroom to her parlor. She then went to tell her young mistress.

"Ask him to enter," said Mlle. Derville, closing the piano.

Jeanne had not finished speaking when the baron stood before her. The baron had thought Mlle. Derville would decline to see him, so he had followed close on the servant's footsteps.

Jeanne saw by a glance that the baron was intensely excited. His face was flushed, his eyes shone with fierce brilliancy, and his hands trembled. He steadied himself on his feet, for Jeanne did not offer him a seat, and tried to recover the audacity which his dinner bibations had given him. The fresh air and Jeanne's presence brought him back to the reality of things, which did not suit his purpose.

Mlle. Derville stood before him drawn up to her greatest height, cold, immovable, haughty, with questioning looks, pointing to the door with her raised hand, as if ordering him to leave without entering.

M. de Blanchelande seemed not to understand her movement. He looked all around the saloon, examining every corner, like a man who wished to shelter himself in case of an attack. This movement did not indicate an intention as if he intended to obey Mlle. Derville's mute command.

Astonishment, indignation, and anger had at first choked the words in the young girl's throat. She soon recovered her presence of mind.

"Leave at once, sir," said she.

In place of leaving, M. de Blanchelande advanced towards her.

Jeanne instinctively drew away in fear.

The baron's face was certainly not reassuring, and before this he had never been so impertinent to Mlle. Derville.

Her sudden movement placed Jeanne against the fireplace. She held out her hand to ring the bell, but before she could do so her arm was seized in an iron grasp, and in a rough voice which did not belong to a man of his rank, manners, or usual habits, M. de Blanchelande said, "No, I do not wish you to ring. I do not wish it—and you shall not ring."

"Then go!" replied Jeanne, who hid her great tears under an assumed indifference.

"That was well done!" said the baron, placing himself between Jeanne and the bell. "That was a command to go, that Mlle. Rachel might have envied you. Unhappily, it was not before the public. It is not the time for so much tragedy. We play here only a little comedy—and still for my benefit."

Jeanne crossed her arms over her breast, as if to still the beating of her heart, and with stern lips and frowning brow, she tried the magnetic effect of looking the baron directly in the eyes.

"Oh! no! no! no charming me," said M. de Blanchelande, lowering his head as if he feared the too powerful influence. "See how many years I have suffered on your account. It has been too long! Here is an end to all that! I will not suffer any longer! I love you, and you have treated my love only with scorn and contempt. I have implored you, and you laughed at me. The roles are now changed; it is your turn to entreat! It is now your turn to weep."

"I only weep for those I love," replied Mlle. Derville, with haughty dignity. "And you, Monsieur le Baron, might sooner draw every drop of blood, than one of my tears, for I do not love you."

"This suits me exactly," continued the baron; "this last burst of pride; this courageous contest. I would love you less if you did not resist me. I am so certain, besides, of conquering you. But acknowledge that for a spirited young girl you have been very foolish. You could have had me for a tender, devoted adoring friend—a devoted lover, and for my only recompense, I asked to be allowed to serve, to protect, to save you."

"And to destroy me!" replied Jeanne, in a tone of fierce indignation.

"I wished to be thy father."

"You! *my* father!"

"A woman never would have had more devoted care. Your pleasure would have been the study of my life. You would have wished for nothing. Your secret wishes would have been gratified. And what did I desire in return? Nothing! I only asked to be allowed to love you."

"This nothing, as you term it, was everything for me."

"And you, ungrateful creature, wicked, hard-hearted soul, not content with refusing me, you have weighed me down with your hatred. This is still not all. I might have pardoned your hatred, but you have added your scorn at that ball. You remember that ball. You humiliated me before my son-in-law. My rival! my preferred rival! and triumphed over us both at the same time. Since then and notwithstanding your unworthy behavior, I have done everything I could to re-establish myself in your good graces. All has been useless. Your insolence has increased with the humility of my love.

"The other evening, when I had reached the end of my resources, I sent you a letter breathing the despair of my heart, which you did not even condescend to read, and threw in my face in the public street. Do you know that between men such an insult would cause death?

"I have chosen a sweeter vengeance," said he, approaching her with that stealthy cat-like movement, which renders the attacks of the feline race so dangerous.

Jeanne saw her danger, and shuddered when she remembered Jacqueline was out, and she was entirely alone with this miserable man. The baron, whom she had always considered so agreeable, and who had always treated women so courteously, no matter what were his real wishes, always allowed them the privilege of refusing his attentions—the baron, now half intoxicated and under the influence of this wild passion, yielded only to those instincts which degrade man lower than the brute.

Around Jeanne there was such an atmosphere of purity and feminine dignity, that no one had ever forgotten the respect that was her due. She had never before seen such a danger; all her delicate womanly instincts were alarmed. She shuddered, and the cold dampness came on her forehead and dimmed her eyes, that now saw no more. This faintness lasted a few moments, but her natural courage soon returned; she reproached herself for calumniating M. de Blanchelande in a moment of foolish terror. There was a great distance between a culpable desire and its accomplishment. He had doubtlessly desired to frighten her, and having done so he would now leave.

All these mixed passions fermenting in the weak soul of the baron and his long surpressed desires, exploded suddenly in a terrible manner. The sight of Jeanne near him, beautiful and terrified, increased his passion. He found her a hundred times more fascinating in her paleness, anger and terror. His passions always strong, were now in such a state as to be controlled only by his will, and his will betrayed him at this moment, like every thing else. Reason no longer acted for him, he was under the dominion of his nerves and senses.

He advanced still nearer Jeanne.

"Jacqueline! come to me, Jacqueline!" said Jeanne in a voice rendered shrill by her despair.

"I tell you she shall not come!" repeated Monsieur de Blanchelande; "no one in the world shall come between you and me."

"Only God!" murmured Jeanne, looking up to heaven, as if to call for its aid and show her reliance.

"God is like thy Bretonne," murmured the baron, laughing; "He has gone away—He does not hear thee!"

One might have said he was like an executioner, and prolonged Jeanne's agony so as to enjoy her beauty and fright.

"Oh, you are not my master yet," said Jeanne with a wild look. "Death always stands between us, and the road is open for any one who dares to enter."

Whilst pronouncing these words with exaltation, Mlle. Derville darted to the window. The baron, who had not taken his eyes off of her face, understood her intention. He rushed towards her and dared to seize her in his arms. At this odious embrace, the first she had ever received, Jeanne felt horror-stricken, and with strength lent her by her indignation, she disengaged herself from de Blanchelande and pushed him into the middle of the room.

"Miserable coward! leave me at once!" said she, with flashing eyes.

"No! I will not leave thee! I wish —it must be"—

Whilst speaking, the baron returned to the young girl. Jeanne thought all was over for her; she implored God's help from the depths of her soul; and wild, desperate—not knowing what she did—she fell on her knees.

At the instant he intended to devour his prey, a powerful hand seized his shoulder and threw him violently away. The shock was so sudden that the baron went down on his knees, but he got up very quickly.

"I am not afraid of two of you!" said he, turning around.

But, instead of seeing Jeanne's servant, whom he expected, the only person whose interference he dreaded, he found in front of him a tall, strong-looking, energetic, determined man.

The baron, on seeing this new adversary, understood how hopeless was his position. This feeling brought him to himself, and showed him the enormity of his crime. He wished himself a hundred miles from the Rue de Clichy. He tried to find a way of retreat, but he could not easily disembarrass himself from the terrible position in which he was found.

"Kneel down! you wretch! and ask forgiveness," said, in a stern voice, the unknown champion that Providence had sent in Mlle. Derville's defence; "ask mademoiselle's forgiveness, or I will strangle you at her feet."

The Baron de Blanchelande was no coward, though his adversary had all the advantages of youth and strength. After all, a man is only a man, and one can always make an honorable retreat. He recovered from his surprise and examined his conqueror attentively. He saw he had a fine carriage, a moustache, military buttons, and a red ribbon fastened in his coat; he understood that this affair was with an officer—a guarantee in itself.

"Sir," said he to the stranger, with great haughtiness, "we belong to the same society, I believe. We will meet again elsewhere, and I hope you will give me the reasons for this sudden inconvenient interruption of a domestic quarrel."

"A domestic quarrel!" said Jeanne, interrupting, with pale face, flashing eyes, and quivering lips. "Ah! sir, you add calumny to violence, and insulting language to insulting actions—two cowardices for one!"

"Do not waste your words on him, mademoiselle," said the unknown one, addressing Jeanne with every token of respect; "one does not answer such rascals. As for you, sir, who dare to ask a reparation from me, never let me see your face again. I shall not always be restrained by mademoiselle's presence, and I will make you pay dearly for your outrageous conduct of to-day."

The stranger pointed to the door.

The baron could not endure to be humiliated before Jeanne, after his unsuccessful contest, and kept a determined resistance.

This obstinacy caused his adversary to lose all the patience he possessed; he seized the unfortunate man, dragged him to the staircase, and said in a haughty tone:

"M. de Blanchelande, I know you, and I despise you, for you have dishonored by this infamous action your title of nobleman. But, be warned! I watch over this young girl, and you will always find me between you! Out of respect for your name, I will not drag you before the public tribunal, which is all you now deserve, for no gentleman can communicate with you; but on my word of honor, if you ever again annoy Mlle. Derville in the slightest degree, I will kill you like a dog. Do you hear me? Now go!"

Wild with sorrow, but hiding his rage and cursing his impotency, de Blanchelande went away, whilst Jeanne's impetuous avenger, calm and tranquil, returned to the saloon.

Jeanne, pale and trembling, realizing the horrible danger that she had escaped, had fallen back on her seat, faint with her emotions, but adorably beautiful.

Thus her deliverer found her when he returned.

"Oh! my friend, how can I thank you?" said she, holding out her two hands to the young man.

"Do not thank me, and forget this sad scene, which will be so painful for you to remember. Forget this man—forget everything but ourselves, my be-

loved Jeanne!" said he, taking a seat near the young girl.

Whilst Mlle. Derville recovers from her very excusable emotion, we will introduce to the reader this stranger, whose unexpected interference came so fortunately to her aid.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HIS name is Pierre Verteins. Monsieur de Verteins (a gentleman Jeanne had been introduced to at the house of one of her favorite pupils) was thirty or thirty-five years of age—a military looking person—his cold, dignified attitude gave him an air of command. Naturally grave, he seemed colder to casual acquaintances—but the sternness of his looks was softened by the sweetness of his smile; which, when it came, seemed to lighten up his face with affectionate and tender goodness.

A very near relation of Mme. de Fresnelles', where Jeanne had first met him; connected, through her, with the most noble families, in whose houses he was received on intimate terms, Monsieur de Verteins, in a century in which the public must know everything, led a mysterious existence, which frightens some women and attracts others, but interests *all*. Men he kept systematically at a distance.

Entering the army as a volunteer, he served with great distinction in Africa, gaining two epaulettes and an end of ribbon. Still young on his return, he threw up his commission, and for ten years wandered in far-off countries, eccentric, unknown, away from the very necessary but galling restraints of the civilized walks of life. He never spoke of his adventures, as travellers generally do, who have gone from the pole to the equator apparently with that *one* object. He was impenetrably reserved—never had he been known to pronounce the name of a woman— yet his friends who knew him best, connoisseurs who are not often deceived in such matters, recognised in him the signs of strong, deep, almost fatal passions.

Perhaps by searching well, some violent and sorrowful drama might be found in a corner of his existence — but no matter what they suspected, no one knew. They conjectured—women still more than men—women do love to conjecture. Even Jeanne, this serious beauty, had felt an interest in M. de Verteins which amazed herself, for she had met him very rarely, and only in this one house.

Mlle. Leonie de Fresnelles loved her instructress very much, and Jeanne returned her affection — notwithstanding the thousand things that occupy the time of a fashionable young lady, she was always punctual—this is a politeness the rich owe to the poor. Jeanne, whose whole time was engaged, arrived with the punctuality of a chronometer.

Leonie would say, "Here is Mlle. Derville," when she heard the bell; "it is useless to look at the clock, it is a quarter to eleven." The books and papers were ready, and Mme. de Fresnelles nearly always welcomed her.

Once, however, Jeanne was delayed by indisposition, and Leonie by the attractions of some shops, where they tempt the buyer and his purse.

Mlle. Derville was ushered into a small saloon. She knew she was late, and would most probably have to wait a while; so believing herself alone, she took off her hat, arranged her hair in the glass, and walked to the piano, where she began to sing. Raising her head accidentally, she saw M. de Verteins half hid in the window-recess.

Jeanne had dined with him once or twice. Mme. de Fresnelles, who understood and appreciated Mlle. Derville, had introduced her to her cousin M. de Verteins, as a friend of the family, as well as her daughter's instructress. So they were not entire strangers to each other.

Jeanne blushed when she saw him, as any young girl would have done in her place.

Monsieur de Verteins advanced smiling. "Will you pardon my indiscretion, or rather my discretion?" said he. "I thought you did not see me, and I did not wish to interfere with your work. Stolen moments are sweeter than any other. They did not expect you so soon, and they shut me up to wait here for my cousin."

"Then we will wait together," replied Jeanne, who instantly recovered

her presence of mind. No! I am wrong —I owe twenty-five minutes already."

"That I am allowed to pay for you—am I not?"

"Where is Mlle. Leonie?" said Jeanne, without any more direct reply.

"The ladies have gone to buy some dresses—an important matter."

"Very important matter, indeed," replied Jeanne, in a lively tone; "the choice of a tissue, of the cut, of a shade, of the trimming. You laugh, sir! but it is the half of one's existence, and often the best."

"Not for you, at least," replied M. de Verteins, looking at Jeanne's quiet dress, for as Mlle. Derville wished to pass unnoticed, there was not the least ornament about it. Nothing could be more simple than her stuff-dress, with white linen collar and sleeves. "Not for you," continued he, "for I have never seen you in anything but black or gray."

"Oh, as for me," said Jeanne, shrugging her shoulders; "I do not count—I am not a woman!"

"Then you are a very good dissembler, for I swear you have the air of one."

"I dress myself—I clothe myself—this is all I can do. I leave the grand toilets to your great ladies—it is their only occupation."

"This is a fact. Their heads are more empty than their hearts. You do not envy them, I imagine?"

"Neither envy nor pity them. There are some, like Mme. de Fresnelles, showing themselves worthy of their good fortune by using it well. There are others who forget that all intelligent life ought to have a great, noble, serious end. They do not understand this—it is not their fault. They think too much of themselves, of their dress; but, sir, what would you have? Beautiful already, they desire to render themselves still more beautiful; for they feel beauty is their destiny, and they must be the admiration and pride of their world. Each one has their appointed lot. We must accept it without complaint, which is useless and in bad taste."

M. de Verteins was pleased that Mlle. Derville did not fall into the net he spread for her, and abuse those more fortunate in rank and estate.

"You said all that with a justice I admire," said he, looking at Mlle. Derville.

"I think I am right, and I speak as I feel."

"I will not praise you, as you flee from that as others do from blame, but I know my own ideas on the good reasoning of this little head; and I will proclaim aloud—when you are not near—the great wisdom of a young philosopher of twenty years, called Mlle. Jeanne, if I am not mistaken."

"Jeanne Derville, at your service! this is the name to which the young philosopher responds."

"Jeanne Derville!" replied M. de Verteins, with great vivacity. "Was your father an officer?"

"Yes, sir, Colonel of the 41st of the line," replied Jeanne, with a feeling of filial pride — the most innocent and lawful of all prides. "But how did you know? Is it possible you knew my father?" And with an irresistible impulse, she went up to M. de Verteins.

"Pardon me, sir," said she, hardly able to restrain her tears; "pardon me for an emotion of surprise and trouble. It is fifteen years, sir, since I lost my father! I adored him, and no one ever speaks to me about him now. Where did you know him?"

"In Africa, mademoiselle; my father was his general, and I have often sat on his knee."

Jeanne listened eagerly, her heart in her eyes, and such a radiant expression of happiness in her face that had not been there for many a long day.

"I was then too young to understand the noble qualities that caused all to render him homage; but I have often heard my father speak of Col. Derville in terms of the highest praise."

"Oh! how glad I am," said Jeanne, with a charmingly frank expression. M. de Verteins, encouraged by the sight of this almost heavenly joy, continued to speak of the colonel with warmth and enthusiasm. He told her how much the colonel was esteemed by the officers, respected by the soldiers, loved by every one.

"Oh, sir, if you only knew how happy you have made me!" murmured Jeanne, trying to hide her tears, which would run down her cheeks. "My poor father! He

deserved so much happiness, and he enjoyed so little! After being married for a few years, he saw my mother die in the bloom of her youth and beauty—my mother, full of love, whom he adored. He endured life after this only for me. I alone tied him to this world, and he died heart-broken at the idea of leaving me an orphan, without relations, friends or fortune, exposed to all the misfortunes of destiny. I did not *then* understand the deep, bitter anguish of his soul. Oh! that tender heart—now, understanding life and its trials, I can fully appreciate his anxiety."

These noble feelings made a singular impression on M. de Verteins. The man of the world, usually so cold, reserved, sceptical, scornful, now yielded to the man of nature, nobly born, good, enthusiastic, capable of the best resolutions. They brought out the interior man, which adverse circumstances had choked in him, but which was revived by her look of lively interest.

M. de Verteins felt the change. Jeanne felt a true and lively gratitude for the man who thus spoke of her father, who stirred in the depths of her being the only feeling that had never deceived her, and that had so often brought her calmness and consolation.

Leonie came in.

"Oh, my dear friend! just think, M. de Verteins knew my father!" said Jeanne, advancing to meet her.

"So much the better," replied the young girl; "that will help to secure my pardon for being so late—you must not scold me."

"No, because you are usually so punctual; and besides, yours is the last lesson I am obliged to give to-day. But we must work hard to make up for lost time."

M. de Verteins left the young ladies, and the lessons commenced.

CHAPTER XXV.

JEANNE knew her duty too well, not to repress all her emotions during the lesson, and was perfectly calm the moment she touched the books. Mme. de Fresnelles entered just as the teacher was leaving.

"Mlle. Derville, it seems we are friends. M. de Verteins talked a great deal yesterday about Col. Derville, without being certain he was your father. He will doubtlessly be very glad to talk to his daughter. Will you take dinner with us to-day, without any ceremony?"

Jeanne had no reason for refusing the invitation, so she accepted with pleasure. It was a charming dinner; M. de Verteins throwing out his amusing, novel, bright ideas — Leonie as agreeable as possible—and Mme. de Fresnelles had never been more charming. M. de Verteins did not show Jeanne any particular attention by word or look, but he brought a life and animation into the conversation with which he was permitted to honor Jeanne. The colonel's daughter, for her part, felt much drawn towards him.

This vague feeling, that she could neither define nor explain, did not resemble in the least what she had formerly experienced for Maxence de Bois-Robert, in the first opening of her heart. What she now felt was more calm, deep and serious — besides, thoughts of her father, mingling with this growing sympathy, justified her feelings—she seemed free from danger, protected and sanctified by his august and dear spirit.

After dinner, the chit-chat was prolonged over the coffee, and Jeanne forgot the time, until an indiscreet clock sounded the hour, and recalled her to the realities of life.

"Oh!" said she, "can it be nine o'clock? I am very naughty—my poor Jacqueline will scold me for not keeping my word. I must go at once."

"Have your servants arrived?" said M. de Verteins, laughing. "Shall I order them to come up?"

"I have a coachman and a valet, or rather a footman!" replied Jeanne, laughing. "As for my equipage, it is admirable, and changes horses four or five times a day—only it will not, for some reason, come for me—I have to go wait where it passes at the end of the street."

"Then I guess it is not a clarence, nor a brougham, nor a caleche, nor a briska, nor a coupé."

"Oh, no, sir! nothing resembling any of these; it is—an omnibus."

"If you will allow, mademoiselle, we will go with each other."

Jeanne looked at Mme. de Fresnelles, who motioned her to accept.

Jeanne was much pleased with the prospect of this escort; she put on her bonnet, kissed Leonie, bade farewell to Mme. de Fresnelles, and turning to M. de Verteins, said: "If you like, sir."

As they went out, Pierre offered her his arm, which she refused; and as he seemed slightly surprised, she said, "I am so accustomed to walking alone, it seems natural to me. I beg your pardon."

He did not insist.

"Oh!" said Jeanne, suddenly hurrying her steps; "there comes my carriage."

She signalled to the omnibus to stop; M. de Verteins called, but they did not hear.

"It must be full—it is very hard to find a seat at this hour. What will you do?"

"I do not know," said she, looking all around in hopes of finding a cab. "Carriages are only to be found in Paris when you do not need them."

"The next omnibus passes in five minutes—will you wait?" and seeing a shadow on his companion's face: "Is the office far away?" said he.

"Far enough."

"Well, what shall we do? I am at your orders—if we walk towards the omnibus, we will meet one before long. What do you say?"

"I believe you are right."

Pierre offered his arm; which, this time, she did not refuse. They walked without speaking; for she seemed embarrassed, and he respected her feelings.

The omnibus appeared—Jeanne was both glad and sorry, but she hid the last emotion very carefully.

"Adieu, mademoiselle," said the young man rather sadly; "the happiness of some makes the misfortunes of others. I have still a long walk."

The omnibus stopped, but while they were saying farewell, a woman jumped in and took the only place. The conductor snapped his whip, the two Percherons started.

"It is no one's fault," said Jeanne, taking her mishap gaily; "they are all full! How I pity you!"

"We will go along."

They stopped on the bridge of the Tuilleries to admire the night and the immense city.

M. de Verteins seeing an omnibus approaching, did not dare to risk a third happy chance, so he asked Jeanne if she was a good walker?

"I walk a great deal."

"Then you could walk home from here."

"I believe I am capable of the great effort."

"Well, we will go on foot, like two humble citizens. This little walk will do me good—I have a headache from working all day."

"Ah, do you also work?" asked Jeanne, in a tone of affectionate interest, drawing near to M. Verteins by an involuntary but charming instinct.

"Certainly I work, and a great deal, too."

"For your own pleasure, then?"

"That means—let us understand each other—that it pleases me to work; but I am obliged to work—I do not deny that."

"So much the better," said Jeanne, with a spontaneous feeling she could not restrain.

"And why so much the better?" said Pierre, stopping to look attentively at the young girl.

"Oh," replied Jeanne, slightly confused, "because work is a good thing. At the commencement it seems rather hard, but you soon get used to it, and end by loving it."

"You ought to know, for you are busy all the time, I believe."

"As busy as the days are long, and in winter much more so. I give my first lesson at eight o'clock; and as it is far away, I am obliged to leave at seven."

"Before daylight?"

"That depends on the seasons."

"Poor girl!"

"Nonsense! it is so arranged! I do not complain. I know the streets of Paris so well—I might ask for the situation of inspector of streets and public monuments from the Prefect of the Seine."

"Who would hasten to refuse you."

"Naturally; so I will not ask for it."

They both laughed a good, hearty, natural laugh.

"And are your evenings disengaged?"

"Oh! not all. I should be very happy if they were; but no—I give one or two lessons after dinner, sometimes—we cannot refuse the ladies."

"But do you earn much by this hard life?"

"Enough for one who is not very exacting. With perseverance and good luck, in seven or eight years I may amass enough to keep me from dying of hunger."

"And you do not complain; you do not recriminate; you do not accuse your life; you do not abuse your destiny, as so many others would in your place. You live tranquil, serene, almost happy."

"The reason is, I am somewhat of a philosopher. When I feel like complaining—for I have my sad quarters of an hour—I look below me and I murmur no more. I remember the past, and I bless the present. Yes, indeed, I have endured many trials, but they have taught me to know and appreciate what is generous in human nature. I have seen few days pass without feeling grateful to some one. Behold! you have just told me I am good. I do not deserve any praise for that, as I have no right to be wicked."

"Mademoiselle," said M. de Verteins, with a remarkably sincere tone, "flattery is not in my line—it is a long time since I have paid a compliment to any lady—but allow me simply to state how much I admire you."

"To all my other good qualities for which you give me credit, please add a little modesty," said Jeanne, "and then you will not dare to say such things to my face."

"You are right to forbid my speaking—for I feel that I am far beneath my subject."

"Behold! that will dispense with any fresh ones," said Mlle. Derville, showing him the door. "We are at our destination. Adieu, and thanks."

M. de Verteins pressed Jeanne's arm lightly with his hand as he relinquished it.

"Am I forbidden from taking this address?" said he, looking at the number of the house.

"It is not forbidden, but it is useless. I do not receive any one. No man has ever crossed the threshold of my door. It is my positive order, and I make no exceptions."

"Do you also forbid me from assisting sometimes at Leonie's lessons?"

"That might perhaps be cruel. I do not know what interest you may have in your sweet cousin."

"Ah! all daughters of Eve," murmured Pierre, as he withdrew. "The best of them has always a taste of the milk of the first mother. You are coquettes even when there is no serpent."

CHAPTER XXVI.

M. DE VERTEINS would not have made this reflection if he could have read Mlle. Derville's thoughts, and the impression he had made on her beautiful soul—so young, so correct, so sincere.

Jeanne felt he was one of the most distinguished men she had ever met; she felt the charm of his manner, his simple, courteous, unaffected politeness, his reserve, which, at first hid, soon yielded and displayed the depths of a passionate nature, well capable of captivating a soul.

Jeanne's was captured before she was aware of the fact. The feeling was strong and quiet; since her unhappy adventure with Maxence de Bois-Robert, the men against whom she then armed herself seemed completely indifferent to her. She was delighted with this peace of mind.

M. de Verteins suddenly aroused her—he brought a new element into her existence—and, strange to say, after suffering so much, she received it without fear. She was astonished at her interest in a man she had known for so short a time, but she did not fear. She did not call this growing sentiment by any name which could alarm her security. The cloud he was enveloped in served to reassure her. She had regretted often in her hard life of toil the want of a friend on whom to rest. Friendship has no sex—little importance whether it is a man or a woman. One often says that when it is between man and woman, and they are purely united, it is more energetic and unresisting—she desired to test it—no more!

Jeanne slept peacefully this night; something told her she could rely on M. de Verteins. A thousand things attached her to him—especially his poverty—for he was poor, since he said he was obliged to work. This poverty diminished the distance between them, and rendered their friendship more easy. A poor girl like herself, could not have a rich friend. Friendship only occurs between equals.

"Ah! if we could only be friends—I would be good and devoted to him—he seems to suffer like myself." This was Mlle. Derville's last waking thought.

M. de Verteins' thoughts were not so calm. Pierre was a man—he knew real life, serious and common—he possessed quiet sense, like all those who have passed through the storms of passion—he cradled no illusions—he nursed no chimeras—he did not disguise his true sentiments under false names—he knew that friendship from a man for a woman like Jeanne, could soon be called love. Was he in love already?

"I thought I had paid my debt, and was relieved for life—must I commence again my fatal experiences? I promised myself to have no more adventures—I have reached the years of discretion—but to love such a loyal girl could not be called an adventure. Does she not offer all the warrant for happiness that man can desire? How honest, pure, and sweet does her beautiful soul shine through those large eyes! How distinguished she is in her manner! She walks like a queen or a goddess—a man must feel stronger with such a woman on his arm. Yes, but she has neither fortune, nor relations, nor family. She will bring her husband nothing but herself. But is not that enough? She is loyalty, frankness, gracefulness, fascination itself!—and all that is at my door—I see—I have only to extend my hand to grasp it, and I allow it to escape. This would be truly foolish!

"'But,' says the grumbler, sense, 'is not a love marriage a very foolish thing at your time of life—and in society where money is everything? Would not it be better to fly while there is still time?' She loves me nevertheless, I feel she loves me. I do not believe in the love at first sight our grandmothers so often referred to; they sometimes needed that complaisant excuse — but the sympathy between her and myself, is as prompt as it is strong. With such a woman, there are only two courses to choose—to fly, or to marry her. Cursed be he who would wish to taint this celestial purity!"

Worn out by these contradictory thoughts, M. de Verteins reached his apartment, not far from his cousin's.

Mlle. de Fresnelles did not take a lesson the next day—Jeanne was surprised at finding herself regretting this, on account of losing the opportunity of meeting M. de Verteins. She certainly reproached herself for taking this interest in a man almost an absolute stranger.

"No," said she, "he did not part with me last night like a stranger. The noble, pure, sincere interest he takes in me, is not that of a stranger, If one can never confide in any person, or believe in any one of God's creatures, life would be insupportable. But this is not so—Heaven did not intend us to live in a desert, since He has placed an immortal faith in our hearts. Notwithstanding the Count de Bois-Robert, I have faith in M. de Verteins."

CHAPTER XXVII.

JEANNE'S mind was filled all day with the remembrances of last evening. More than once, as she turned a corner, she glanced quickly around, as if she hoped to see the one who engrossed her thoughts. When she entered Mme. de Fresnelles' at the exact hour, the next day, she felt as if every one must guess her secret. She instantly glanced at the window-seat, but he was not there.

Leonie waited for her at the table, with open books and perfect lessons. All went well. Mlle. Derville's voice had a sweet, supplicating tone, but Leonie did not understand it, and M. de Verteins' name was not uttered.

Jeanne returned home rather sad.

She was not undeceived exactly—the word is too strong—but she was disappointed. Happy when she left home, because she hoped—unhappy on her return, for she hoped no more.

Some days passed silently away. M. de Verteins had disappeared.

Mlle. Derville felt a species of disappointment, like a sorrowful spite.

"Let it go! they are all alike—each just like all the rest. For others I did not care, but for him. At last," continued she, plunging her hands in her fine hair, which she was arranging for the night, "all these foolish ideas must leave me. No sad thoughts! One suffers only when they wish to suffer."

When a person has not himself a deep exclusive affection for a woman, when one has not determined to give her a large part of his life—all his life, he ought not to raise her imagination, excite her thoughts, embarrass her soul—to do thus, is to commit an unkind action, it is playing with the happiness of another. If it is true that over many charming light individuals, the sorrows of love glide like water over marble, they sometimes meet with some that these sorrows wound deeply—that they render desolate.

Notwithstanding all her courage, Jeanne was one of these. One would have been convinced of this, if they had met her eight days after her last meeting with M. de Verteins. She was much changed. Notwithstanding her great moral strength, there was an air of weakness and languor about her it was painful to see—a blue circle around her eyes—her pale cheek—her smile so much more seldom, and when it came, it seemed heart-breaking enough to call for tears. If Jeanne's mother had been at her side, her mother would have preferred to see her cry than to smile so sadly.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOW did it happen that M. de Verteins was waiting on a street far from the Santé, one morning before nine o'clock, where he had heard Jeanne speak of giving lessons? It was not the charms of the place that attracted him. He advanced slowly, looking impatiently at his watch. He watched a certain house very devoutly.

A few minutes past nine Jeanne came out of the house that Pierre was so anxiously watching. The young girl seemed thin, rather like an image of herself, but very sweet and full of a languid, charming gracefulness.

"Dear girl! can she have been sick?" thought he, seeing her walk so slowly towards him.

He came out of the shadow as she approached, but Jeanne, walking with her head down, absorbed in thinking of M. de Verteins, did not see him; he struck his cane on the pavement, so as not to frighten her.

Jeanne looked up and saw him. Her first impulse was to rush towards him; but a secret strength stopped her suddenly. A flame burned in her breast, the red blood rushed to her cheeks and retreated, leaving her still more pale. Pierre could believe that there was only a white statue before him. He then experienced a great emotion mixed with joy.

"Ah!" thought he, "if I have caused that change, my whole life could not repay her for her love, for giving her all the happiness I received from her."

He advanced, hat in hand, as respectfully as if she had been the reigning queen.

"Behold," said he, in a slightly altered tone, "a happy chance for me, mademoiselle."

"Then," thought she, suppressing the joy of her heart, "it is only an accident, then, a simple chance; and I, fool that I was, believed he came here to meet me." She recovered herself by a determined will.

"The rue de la Santé," said she, "is not as much frequented as the Boulevard des Italiens, and it is truly a lucky chance to meet here at nine o'clock in the morning any one who lives in the street de Varenne or de Clichy."

"You come here, nevertheless, several times a week?"

"Yes, to give my lessons. Do you come for the same reason? Do you wish to compete with me? I warn you that it is a hard undertaking. We will both find it very difficult to live."

"Fear nothing; I will not steal your patrons. You shall still have Mlle. de Cerny, who lives over there in that large barrack you just left. See how well-informed I am."

"Very well."

"You are not very punctual, for you were not here Friday nor Monday."

"That is a fact—they were all out of town. But how did you know that?" asked she, with great vivacity.

"I was here both days."

"Oh! then, the chance is still more incomprehensible."

"May I be sincere with you?"

Jeanne, pale and trembling, looked at him without speaking; but her large, timid eyes besought his forbearance.

"I wished to see you," said he, in a low, sweet voice, "in the rue de la Santé. It is not my fault that I am obliged to take the open air for a parlor. There is no opportunity to talk at my cousin's, and you will not permit me to visit your house. But since you have once permitted me to be your escort—"

"Oh! here," said she, with a little malicious fun, "is the place I take the omnibus."

"You naughty little one! Wait at least till it is full."

Her only reply was a sweet smile.

"I wish to speak to you, and as I dare not ask you to meet me, I must catch you on the wing."

Whilst talking they walked alongside of each other.

"Sir," said Jeanne, in a few moments, with a shade of charming embarrassment, "I do not know how to tell you—but you must understand—it is not nightfall, as it was last week, and if any of my pupil's relations should meet me tête-à-tête with a young gentleman—"

"A young gentleman! You flatter me, that you may send me away; but I am not going."

"You must—what will the people say?"

"Oh! let the world alone. It is foolish when it is not wicked, and it is wicked when it is not foolish."

"Still we must regard it. Adieu, sir."

At a turn in the street, Jeanne saw a little coupé, with a large horse, no arms on the side, only a little wreath of parsley leaves surrounded with pearl flowers. The coachman on his box, straight and grave as a Roman emperor, did not turn his head.

"Get in," said M. de Verteins, in a tone of sweet authority.

In place of doing so, Jeanne drew back.

"I implore you to!" continued M. de Verteins, beseeching her with his looks.

"And where then must I go to?"

"Where you wish, provided I may accompany you."

"Do you know this seems as if I was being carried off?"

"Fortunately there are no spectators," said Pierre, looking around.

Mlle. Derville got in; strange as all this seemed, she had perfect confidence. M. de Verteins took his seat alongside of her, and the carriage started without any orders being given to the coachman. Exceptional positions authorize conduct that would not be allowed in ordinary life.

"You and I, mademoiselle, are perfectly free, and owe an account of our actions only to God and to man. If you could not have granted what I ask of you, I would not have asked it." Pierre spoke with such noble sincerity, that Jeanne was soon reassured.

"I have confidence!" murmured Jeanne.

The carriage, with the blooded horses, drove much more rapidly than the omnibus horses Jeanne was accustomed to. The young girl did not know where she was going, and could not prevent a feeling of uneasiness. Pierre himself was much moved. Jeanne, seeing his emotion, calmed her own. They stopped before the gate of the Jardin des Plantes, they got out, and walked to a beautiful seat crowned by a superb tree.

"Sit down, mademoiselle," said Pierre, leading Jeanne to a seat placed in the shade of the tree.

The young girl yielded with child-like docility. M. de Verteins sat down beside her, and took her hand; he remained silent a few moments, then turning to Jeanne, said:

"Do you know, mademoiselle, why I have shunned you so carefully for eight days?"

"No, sir; I acknowledge I am ignorant."

"Have you not been rather astonished at this extraordinary movement?"

"Situated as we were—such slight acquaintances—sir, I have no right to be astonished."

"You have noticed that I avoided you?"

"Ah! goodness! why did you take this trouble?"

"Are you sincere in this question, mademoiselle?"

"I assure you, sir, that frankness is one of my greatest faults."

"Preserve it well, and to-day allow me to call on it."

"Not too much?" said Jeanne, raising her beautiful eyes sweetly.

"No, only a little. What do you think of me?"

"Allow me to say, I do not know you well enough to have an opinion personally. I am forced to take that of others."

"A fact?"

"Do not complain, since that is good."

"Thank you! but I return to my first question. What do you think of me in regard to yourself?"

"Well, since you require it, I have always found you anxious to be kind to me, that you have treated me always with distinguished consideration, as they say in your society, that you have shown me a forethought and regard—"

Jeanne stopped.

"Is this all?" said M. de Verteins.

"Is not that enough?"

"No, go on!"

"Well, I have attributed all that to your goodness rather than my merits, and to the benevolence of a noble and generous soul. You have said to yourself that I was an honest young girl, in a difficult and precarious situation, and by treating me as a lady of your own rank, you have addressed to me the most delicate flattery."

"Is this all?"

"Oh, yes, indeed!"

"Well, you have not done justice to my feelings. You have not given this deep, ardent, exalted sympathy its true name, which I had despaired of experiencing until I met you. It is love! Do not let this word frighten you. Listen without fear. It is love, love in its highest terms."

Jeanne was singularly moved, her heart beat quickly, the blood rushed to her cheeks, she dared not look at M. de Verteins. She felt the silence becoming too significant.

"Did you fly from me because you loved me?" she asked, directly.

"For that very reason," replied he, with great effort; "but," added he, with a child-like manner, "some resolutions are easier made than kept. I have failed in the strength to keep mine, and, pardon the avowal, it is because I could not help myself that I am at your feet;" and he knelt before her.

Jeanne did not reply, but she looked at him with sweet and infinite tenderness, seeming to say, "You would then have been very unhappy to know that I also loved you?"

"Yes, you are right," said he, answering her looks. "I was foolish—stupid—mad; but how could I help myself? I wanted confidence."

"Confidence!"

"Yes, confidence in myself, and perhaps in you."

"Confidence then in both of us?"

"I said to myself, a woman like you was made for luxury, brightness, and the joys of a happy life—your true destiny, and I believed the man who could not offer you all that had no right to aspire to your hand."

"You had a flattering opinion of me, and one that proves how little you know my character. Are these joys you speak of made for me? Is my life anything but one continued toil? A task always accepted, but never ended, renewed from day to day. And I resign myself to this life, to this sometimes hard duty entirely alone, by myself, without aid! without a friendly hand to lean upon! without one dear voice to say to me, 'Courage, there are two of us!' And do you think that having a loyal and devoted affection near me, I would dream of the ordinary pleasures which I never enjoyed? Ah, sir! let me tell you, you have judged wrongly!"

"Perhaps so; but it was not a judgment without appeal. Eight days have changed my ideas, and taught me that I cannot live without you. They have given me the audacity to ask you to allow me to partake of the trials of your life, to render them, if possible, lighter."

Jeanne's eyes rested on him, full of confidence, and bright with heavenly peace. But she waited silently for him to continue.

"Jeanne," said M. de Verteins, "you now understand my scruples, and whatever you may say, you must esteem the efforts I have made to conquer the sentiments that draw me towards you. I reproach myself with the egotistical desire which forces me to sacrifice you

to myself, and to prevent the occasion perhaps of your becoming all at once rich and happy."

"Sir," replied the young girl, with dignity, which struck M. de Verteins, "I have worked all my life, so as not to need the occasion you speak about. I have done all in my power to gain that independence which is a woman's safe-guard—the sole guarantee of her liberty, the dignity of her life, which permits me to ask only affection from the man who loves me enough to wish me for a wife!"

"Then be mine!" cried M. de Verteins, holding out both hands. "The existence I offer you will be as hard and laborious as the one you lead, but the strength of this affection, the devoted aid you have just spoken of, never, no never, believe me, will any man more gladly offer them."

"And no woman will ever be more happy to accept them."

"Oh! thank you!" said he, kissing both her hands. "This is the happiest day of my life. My wife," said he, with the most tender emphasis that could be given to the words, "My wife, will she do me the honor to breakfast with me?"

"Ought I to?" said Jeanne, with a reliance it was pleasant to observe. "You know whether I ought to say yes; if so I will accept. You are now the master of my fate; I abdicate all power into your hands."

"Then come."

They went to the Park de Bercy, and had a modest repast, but a most charming time, their happy souls expanding to each other. They made a thousand plans for a happy life, and were amazed to find out how well they agreed.

Jeanne had long since said she did not fear work. Pierre seemed equally submissive to the hard common law. Had he not told Mlle. Derville that he also worked? She was, it is true, entirely ignorant of the nature of his occupation. This sudden demand of marriage, agreed to in a burst of sympathy, had prevented her from obtaining "references" from him, as they commonly say. She had confidence.

Besides, as she was poor herself, she felt she had no right to inquire as to the fortune of her intended. Then she loved—love is daring! It was with a feeling of happiness she yielded blindly to her destiny.

Nothing escaped M. de Verteins' notice. He understood and appreciated her delicate reserve. But, at the same time, he considered that if Jeanne had come out successful in this first trial, there was no reason to prolong it. She had proved her disinterestedness and generosity. He must not ask more.

"Marriage is a serious thing," said he. "In the midst of the joys of love we must not feel sad. Still we must think a little of the future—at least one of us."

"Not one, but both!" replied Jeanne.

"In a marriage, as I understand it, this ought to belong to the husband alone; and I have never felt more bitterly than now, remorse for the faults of my youth."

These words, "faults of my youth," caused a cold shudder to run through Jeanne.

"My God!" thought she, "do I already love him so much as to be jealous of the past?"

"For a long time," continued M. de Verteins, "I have led the dissipated life of the men of my time. Alas! I have wasted the larger part of the inheritance I was fortunate to possess too young. Whilst I alone had to endure the results of my errors, they did not trouble me. It requires very little to turn a soldier into a philosopher. It is now, Jeanne, when I think of you, that my trouble commences!"

Mlle. Derville's only reply was a superb gesture of disdain.

"I am then poor; and, still worse—poor through my own fault. In such conditions perhaps we ought not to be so selfish as to make a love marriage; but I tried in vain to conquer my heart. At least, in giving me so generously your hand, you recall my feelings of duty.

"I have been arranging my affairs for eight days. A notary has my order. I have paid all my debts. To-morrow, I will find a great manufacturing friend of mine, and ask a situation in his counting-house. By thus drawing on my own resources, and you may be certain I will draw well, and on yours, too, my beautiful Jeanne, we will have an income of seven or eight thousand francs."

"That, with what I gain from the Rosery, will give us fifteen thousand francs of income, my friend! But do you know that is a fortune? Only, sir, as you are a spendthrift—does it make you angry to hear that?"

"It humiliates me—but does not make me angry."

"Well as you are a spendthrift, and I a very economical little woman, I must hold the purse strings, that we may not spend everything."

"You avaricious one!"

"Have you not just said, we must remember the future."

"And the fortunes of those who come in the future." Jeanne blushed, and looked at her watch.

"Twelve already!"

"Well what of that?"

"It is the day I teach Mlle. Anfonso."

"The banker's daughter?"

"Yes, the same."

"Rue d'Hauteville?"

"Yes."

"Corner of the Boulevard?"

"Right. Do you know her?"

"I know her."

"I shall be late for the first time in my life."

"And for the last. But we do not get married every day. Render me this justice, that I have not tried to keep you. It seems as if I was already your husband, and wish to help you to do your duty. I have kept the carriage. It belongs to one of my friends. The horses go like the wind. May I take you to the banker's door?"

Jeanne nodded her assent. She had already tied on her hat.

"I have not yet had my engagement kiss!" said Pierre, with an unhappy air.

"Because you have not asked for it," said Jeanne, offering him her forehead that no man's lips had ever touched.

"Oh! Jeanne dear! Jeanne, I adore you!" said he, drawing her to him, and pressing her close to his breast.

"I believe you do," said she, looking at him with eyes that seemed to be the portals of heaven.

They returned rapidly to Paris.

"It is pleasant to own a carriage," said Jeanne, settling herself in the corner with one hand still in M. de Verteins'.

"If you would like one—"

"But what would that cost a year?"

"In Paris?"

"Yes, in Paris; since that is to be our home."

"Between six and eight thousand francs, counting everything."

"Just the half of our income."

"That is true; but you would save in omnibuses, and you would not be so long away from me."

Whilst enjoying such tender badinage, they reached the boulevard where they must part.

"When may I see you again?" asked M. de Verteins.

"When you please; now my life belongs to you. No man has ever yet crossed the threshold of my door. I wish now to receive the fruits of my discretion, which has not cost me much, but which is now to my advantage, as it permits me to be as free with you as I am independent towards others. I have a thousand things to do to-day, but if you are not too hard to please come dine with me to-morrow. My Bretonne is not a professed cook, but she will do her best, which is not bad, and she will only be too happy to serve you when she knows. But here we are; do not show yourself yet, adieu, till we meet to-morrow.

"And for ever."

She opened the door, and, light as a bird, disappeared among the people, after throwing a look filled with her whole soul to the one she had left.

"Drive home!" said M. de Verteins to the coachman.

CHAPTER XXIX.

HE threw himself in the corner Jeanne had just left, which still bore the heat and impression of her charming form.

"Yes, indeed!" said he to himself, "I love her! I love her to madness! and I can no longer live without her. I have done what I ought to do—I know she is full of merit—I see she is full of grace. Her mind is as fine as her person is distinguished. She is as good as she is beautiful. She has had many unhappy days—I will try and make her forget

them. I wish to make her happy, by my love."

Happy? Jeanne was so already. The radiant joy of her soul shone on her face. As she entered Mme. Anfonso's saloon, Mlle. Eudoxie, a sweet child, full of natural grace, cried out: "Goodness! mademoiselle, what have you done to be so pretty to day?"

"I have been out driving in the fresh air," replied Jeanne; "perhaps that has given me a color."

Mlle. Anfonso was not mistaken. Jeanne's new feelings gave an unaccustomed animation to her whole face. She was another woman, and every one might see that it was only necessary for her to be happy in order to be handsome.

The transformation was so great, it could not pass unobserved. When Jacqueline opened the door for Mlle. Derville, she stood stationary in the middle of the ante-room and looked her full in the eyes.

"What has happened, Mademoiselle Jeanne?" asked she, with her frank abruptness. "I have not seen you this way for many a long day."

"Well, Jacqueline, a lover has come to me—art thou now satisfied?"

"Yes. Thank Jesus! for, without blaming any one, by my faith! you ought to have had one many a long day ago."

"I believe I have lost nothing by waiting."

"He is young?"

"Not too young."

"Rich?"

"Alas! no."

"Handsome?"

"Nothing to be said on that score!"

"What then has he?"

"I believe he is good."

"That is something."

"And that he loves me—"

"And do you think I am going to like him?"

"You! Perhaps not; but I do!"

"When shall I see him?"

"Soon; I have invited him to dinner to-morrow."

"I will make him some pancakes."

"Do your best. I do not think he will be hard to please."

"Oh, I know! lovers eat anything. They swallow all, without knowing what is placed before them. They dine with their eyes."

The next day Jacqueline scrubbed, brushed, swept, and made the floors so shining it was dangerous to walk on them without rubber shoes. She placed fresh flowers in the flower-pots—could anything be too good for mademoiselle's intended?

The dinner was charming—as all lovers' dinners are. Pierre was in a most charming mood; he exerted all his fine spirits and good humor to please Mlle. Derville.

Jeanne, so accustomed to a long solitude, felt this growing intimacy infinitely charming.

M. de Verteins' love showed in his looks, the tones of his voice, in his whole being. With great art he led the conversation to topics in which they were both interested—on themselves—and he knew how to mix with all things the intimate affection which is the joy and life of both.

"Dear Jeanne," said he, as he was leaving, "I have already lost so much time that I cannot wait long. Will you permit me to hasten all the formalities that would delay the happy moment that will crown my every wish?"

"Do as you please, my friend—you remember what I said yesterday—I have no longer any will of my own."

"What a charming wife I shall have," thought M. de Verteins, "provided marriage does not spoil her, a thing we sometimes see. But," added he soon, with a reassuring thought, "she marries me for myself."

"Are there many—formalities, as you say? I am very ignorant of all that."

"No, not many. In the situation you and I are in it is very easy to get married. We are both orphans and of age. Our contract has been made in advance by the Code which has more mind than notaries. In twelve days, my dear little Jeanne, we can be—you the most adored of wives—I the happiest of husbands."

"Twelve days! that is too soon!" replied Jeanne, who, very brave at a distance, became timid and reserved at this short notice, as was natural to her sex.

"Well, I will give you two weeks," said M. de Verteins, smiling; "but do not ask more, for this is positively all I can do for you."

It was late—Jeanne dared not say so! but she looked at the clock.

"I understand," said he, "you send me away. Adieu, my beautiful Jeanne, I am going, but remember I leave my heart with you."

"Come look for it to-morrow. If you do not find it we will give you another in its place."

He went away transported.

"How did you like him?" Mlle. Derville asked of her nurse, as soon as they were alone.

"I find, mademoiselle, that you have chosen well. He is beautiful when he looks at you, and he looks at you all the time. He has glowing eyes! But he is rather pale."

"As distinguished men always are, unhappily. But he must be very foolish, since he desires to be my husband."

The honest Bretonne found this an unanswerable argument, so she remained silent.

"Go, my poor girl, you will fall asleep," said Mlle. Derville; "I do not need thee. You had better sleep in your little bed, than while standing up."

Jacqueline went to bed. As for Jeanne, she was not sleepy; so she wrote to M. Gravis, to inform him of her marriage, and to obtain her family papers.

Since the day the notary had dared to disclose his passion in the tête-à-tête, his official and venerable head had become very gray. Mlle. Derville, whose happiness had not rendered her selfish, feared that too warm a spark might still be left in his old heart; so she enveloped her news in any number of oratorical precautions. The honest notary swallowed, without too many wry faces, the pill thus prepared; and he sent the young lady the desired papers, with many flowers of rhetoric, in the shape of felicitations.

"Now," said Jeanne, "my affairs are all arranged on this subject; what shall I do with my pupils? They are all my friends—I will invite them to my wedding—this will inform them of the event. But I must not be ungrateful—there is a certain little Aglaé Sorel in the world, without whom, at one moment, I would most probably have died of hunger. She shall have my first visit."

CHAPTER XXX.

NEXT morning, Jeanne mounted slowly the five flights of the young worker, and entered her room like a sunbeam.

"What good wind brought you here?" said Aglaé, running to meet her.

"The wind of marriage."

"You have then met Prince Charmant, and his thousand livres of income."

"Not so titled, nor so charming, and much less than a thousand livres of income."

"But why then do you marry him?"

"Because I love him."

"And because he loves you?"

"Doubtlessly."

"I thought such things happened only in books."

"And in life, but not so often. I come to invite you to my marriage."

"And I will not disappoint you—you must let Rose and me make your wedding-dress, to forget the other—"

"Oh, the other—if you only knew how long it is since I have forgotten that."

"When is the ceremony?"

"I will let you know the day and the hour—I wished to tell you the news first."

"Ah! my dear Jeanne, no one but you would have such ideas. But I love you so much you ought to be kind to me."

"That is true," said Jeanne, kissing her.

With the same light step she hurried to Mme. de l'Isle's. She was so happy she wished to tell every one.

"Good!" said Constance, as she entered, radiantly beautiful. "She has been touched by love, as one can easily perceive. I wonder what she has to tell me?"

"Dear madame," said Jeanne, shaking hands, "you have always taken such an interest in me, that I have no right to hide anything from you. I am going to be married!"

"I see that perfectly," replied Madame de l'Isle, kissing her. "You cannot imagine that I believe you would look so bright for me. But sit down and tell me all about it. And you are really going to be married, you little sly puss—and *against* whom? as M. l'Isle would say."

"It is the most simple story in the world. I have met a young gentleman (but no, I cannot even call him young), a gentleman, if you like. He told me he loved me. He said it earnestly. I have believed him, and have felt I loved him also."

"How, all of a sudden?"

"My goodness! yes, all of a sudden."

"Go on! I listen, it is such fun."

"He asked if I would marry him. I said yes, and we are to be married in fifteen days. That is all."

"Impossible! why it is a perfect novel; and what is the name of the hero?"

"M. Pierre de Verteins."

"M. de Verteins! that is a name belonging to the Faubourg Saint-Germain."

"That is the very place I met him. Is it against the law to marry in the Faubourg Saint-Germain?"

"No, indeed! But wait a moment. M. Pierre de Verteins? I have it. My memory has returned. Your monsieur was pointed out to me at a state ball."

"Very likely, although he does not care much for that sort of thing; between ourselves, he is a little savage, as they say."

"Well! dear little one, his savageness is of no account. Savages in Paris, you see, always attend balls. Your savage is brown—is he not? Tall and thin, pale complexion, lively bright eyes?"

"I believe this description verifies him."

"Well, then, your husband is a hero, my beautiful one."

"They tell me he has distinguished himself in the American war."

"And elsewhere," replied Mme. de l'Isle, with a malicious smile.

Jeanne saw that the lovely Constance had some wicked story to tell that she had better not hear.

"Oh! madame," said she, with an imploring movement, "do not crush my happiness."

"Goodness preserve me from that! it is too rare a bird! I would not even frighten it. Besides, darling, I have never heard anything but good of M. de Verteins."

"Then, will you be kind enough to stand in my mother's place on the day I am married?"

"On that day and for all your life."

"Oh! how much I am loved *now*," thought Mlle. Derville, involuntarily thinking of the past. But she quickly banished these sad thoughts, and departed to give her lessons as usual.

"It will be enough to take one or two days' holiday."

The week passed rapidly. Mlle. Derville hardly knew how. M. de Verteins saw her every morning and evening, and the whole day was taken up with her duties.

"Since I am obliged to allow you to continue your occupations, you must not let me interrupt them. I will arrange my hours to suit you, for my time is less precious than yours."

We can now understand M. de Verteins' timely intervention, when M. de Blanchelande was making his criminal attempt. He was on his way as usual to Jeanne's house when he met Jacqueline in the rue de Clichy. She did not want the trouble of turning back; so she gave him the key of the apartments, with the honest frankness of her nature, saying,

"Go in, sir. Mademoiselle is at home."

Pierre ascended.

Just as he was knocking at the door, he heard the excited voice of the baron. He listened involuntarily for a few moments, and as soon as he understood the cruel intentions of the baron, he rushed into the room, appearing to his fiancée as her saviour—to M. de Blanchelande as the avenger.

We know the rest.

After having settled the baron very definitely, M. de Verteins returned to Jeanne quiet, calm. With smiling lips and extended hand, he feared this painful emotion would be dangerous for her, if prolonged.

He strove to stifle his indignation, and with as indifferent a tone as he could assume, he said, while kissing her forehead, and pressing her two little trembling hands, "Dear Jeanne, I beg you not to think any more of this villain. It will spoil our evening."

"Oh! that man!" said Jeanne, placing her hand over her eyes. "If you only knew all!"

"I know enough to be able to guess the rest. But hold, dear Jeanne, we had better not speak of him. I have now mastered my rage, but if my indignation gets the better of me, I cannot trust myself—I will call M. de Blanchelande to a stern account."

"Oh! M. de Blanchelande! You know him, then?" said Jeanne, becoming very pale.

"Yes, I know him," replied M. de Verteins, looking into Jeanne's eyes.

"And—his son-in-law"—stammered Mlle. Derville—"do you also know him?"

"O, my darling," said M. de Verteins, kissing her hair and her closed eyes, "I love thee as my wife; I believe in thee as I would believe in a cherished daughter who had never left my side; I adore thy celestial purity; but, for thy mother's sake, Jeanne, I implore thee to forget thy past misfortunes—thy past where there were others—and look entirely to the future, where there are only you and me."

"Oh! you are goodness itself!" said Jeanne, bursting into sobs and tears.

M. de Verteins felt this would relieve her, so he silently pressed her head on his shoulder and let her weep a long time. When she was more calm:

"My poor angel," said he, "my chastisement of M. de Blanchelande has been so severe, you have nothing more to fear from him. Soon I will always be near you, and then you can fear no one. I give you notice I am hastening the moment as much as possible."

Jeanne silently looked at M. de Verteins. The color came to her cheeks, the smile to her lips, peace to her brow.

"The affair is ended, we must talk of something else," thought M. de Verteins.

"What are you thinking about?" said Jeanne, taking his hand.

"I think," replied he, "if I were rich I would have everything worthy of you—but as it is, you must be contented with what I can do. Only believe me, it is far below your deserts."

"Dear foolish creature! I need nothing but your love."

"You cannot dress yourself in that, my little darling! Will you allow me to send you some of my cousin's workpeople? You can have perfect confidence in them. It will only be necessary for them to take your measure."

"I do not desire to annoy you, my friend, but you are too much interested in useless details. I only need one white dress, and I have ordered that. If you wish to please me very much, since we are poor, do not give me any wedding presents—I think the custom of wedding presents so useless. You accumulate a multitude of things that are of no use, and soon go out of fashion. It is much better to keep our little savings, and get things later, as we need them. Take me just as I am—without wedding presents—if you please."

"I am perfectly willing to take you as you are," said Pierre, pressing her close in his arms; "but, dear child, because the man who is to marry you is not a millionaire, there is no reason to humiliate him by not allowing him to do what he can. I have found one or two notes in a drawer; let me employ them as I desire. Oh! do not be afraid; I cannot be very foolishly extravagant."

"So much the better; you will save me the trouble of scolding you. But I must send you away. Look at the clock—almost ten! and to-morrow is the day of my famous twenty-franc lesson, at half-past seven, A. M., at rue de Babylon."

"That suits exactly. I have some business in that quarter, and I still have the little carriage at my disposal, with the fast horse. I will call for you, and we will go together, if you will."

"Oh! darling, if you spoil me like this—before—"

"I will spoil you more—afterwards! Farewell, till to-morrow."

"Till to-morrow, dear friend."

The next day M. de Verteins came at the appointed hour.

During the drive he drew a little well-worn velvet case from his pocket.

"Your ring is not yet finished; it is still at the jeweller's, where they are engraving our two names. But here is a little ring; it was my mother's, who would have loved you a great deal. Dear Jeanne, wear it always, please;" and he placed on her finger a beautiful emerald ring, surrounded by little diamonds.

"Oh! it is too beautiful," said the young girl, with childish delight.

"I did not buy it, and I cannot sell it, for it was my mother's. You see I

am obliged to give it to you, and you are condemned to wear it."

"Oh! I will never leave it off!"

"I believe I have a few more stones like that, a pair of ear-rings—perhaps even a bracelet—I am not perfectly sure. All there is will be yours, however."

"You give so sweetly, Pierre, one is glad to receive anything from you, because you give it."

"No one ever was more sweetly thanked," thought M. de Verteins.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE days flew.

The day before the marriage they brought her wedding presents.

Jeanne was out.

On her return she was dazzled by the good taste, profusion, and richness of all she saw. Handsome laces, cashmeres, jewels, splendid dresses; she looked at them all, and packed them up again. "They have made a mistake. This is not for me. The same houses have received two orders at the same time, and they have sent Cinderella the princess's trousseau, and the princess that of Cinderella. For a quarter of an hour the princess will be much disappointed. As for Cinderella, her head would be turned if she were not a very reasonable person, and for a long time certain that she had not a fairy for a godmother; but I do not wish Pierre to know anything about that; he is so good he may feel sorry. Go, Jacqueline, hide all this in my chamber. Make haste, my good girl! That will be better than to stand still, with thy long arms and big eyes."

"Is it not for you then, mademoiselle?"

"How could you dream of such a thing? In that box there is the rent of three or four Roserys."

"Goodness, is that possible?"

"Very possible; but go put all these away. Shall I help you?"

The unhappy corbeille had hardly disappeared when M. de Verteins rang the bell.

"Well, darling," said he, to Jeanne, "where is your 'corbeille?'"

"My corbeille!"

"Yes, your corbeille! it has disappeared. What does that mean?"

"It has not yet arrived, my friend."

"How not arrived! I came to the door with the person who carried it."

"There has been a serious mistake."

"What stories they have told, my poor angel; but let it alone. I will arrange all that without any trouble."

He rang the bell—Jacqueline came. Mlle. Derville did not wish him to question her uncouth Bretonne, so she said:

"Listen, my friend. A corbeille really came here, but not mine; there is a mistake that will be quickly repaired."

"How do you know that?"

"Well, from the magnificence of all the things. This corbeille is worth at least twenty-five thousand francs."

"Well, what of that?"

"Well, you have not a purse as big as your heart, my dear Pierre; and twenty-five thousand francs in my corbeille is positively forbidden, my friend."

"Do you know the Duchess of Sombreuse?"

"By name."

"She is my aunt! An aunt who loves me as if I were her own son. The best of women! When I told her about my marriage I told her all—how good you were, how charming, and how much your time was taken up, and I asked her to superintend your corbeille. 'I will, with pleasure,' said she, 'on one condition, that you will leave it entirely to me, and allow me to offer it as my gift to my future niece.' I could not refuse my aunt—I have accepted; you must do the same, my lovely Jeanne, and without any reflections."

"But, my friend, these things are all too beautiful for my use!"

"Perhaps not. Occasions may occur. Besides, a shawl in a wardrobe costs less than a horse in a stable; and a few yards of lace in a drawer never ruins any one. You need not wear them when you give your lessons!"

Jeanne would not have been a woman if she had not yielded to such good reasons from a man she adored, and given with such a deep conviction, and the evening was passed in examining silks and trying on jewelry.

"I see," said she, "I must always end by doing what you desire."

"To commence then would be more simple!"

"You tyrant!"

"Say victim! Listen, Jeanne, I do not order this time; I entreat—"

"What more do you want?"

"Ask eight days, holiday from your pupils!"

"Do that first. What else do you wish?"

"Can you ask that, you rogue? Do you not see that I would suffer to have our first few days cut up into little pieces? I feel I could not have courage enough to spare you. We will take a trip."

"Oh, how could I guess your wishes?" said Jeanne, thanking him with her looks. "But where will you take me, sir?"

"I have not yet decided. But of what importance is that? we can go where we please. France is a large country, and we can find some pretty little corner in which to hide our happiness!"

"I am agreed!" said Jeanne.

The great day arrived. "The happiest day," as the good old song says, "of your life."

Early in the morning Constance came, to be near her, to help make her very beautiful — a not very difficult task. The wedding dress, which becomes every one, marvellously suited Jeanne, and Mme. de l'Isle, as she kissed her forehead could not help exclaiming, "You are the most beautiful bride I have ever seen!"

This was also the opinion of M. de Verteins' two witnesses, who were struck by her distinguished appearance and good manners.

At the mayor's there was only the number of people necessary to render the act valid, and Constance, who, in undertaking the part of Jeanne's mother, would not quit her for a moment.

Mlle. Derville could not restrain a movement of surprise when she heard the title of marquis given to her intended.

"Pardon me," he whispered in her ear. "I didn't think of mentioning this circumstance—it seems so insignificant to-day. Are you annoyed at becoming a marchioness?"

"I would marry you, even if you were a duke," she replied, with a smile.

The church of the Trinity was not then the splendid edifice it is now. It was only a common stone-plastered chapel, with almost bare walls. But flowers scattered profusely in every direction, gave it to-day the air of a fête.

When Jeanne arrived before the door where the Swiss was waiting for them, she saw the street was filled with superb equipages. The panels of the carriages were collections of heraldry—gold and silver liveries in all directions—footmen in short coats, and coachmen with powdered hair. The fiancée, in walking to the altar, had to pass through a brilliant, curious, interested crowd.

M. de Verteins had the reputation of being a "successful man." This rouses the feelings of women, and foolishly excites their interest. His marriage had been much talked about, and his future bride had been the subject of many thousand commentaries. They said she was beautiful and accomplished, and that the gallant marquis was making a love marriage under the force of very strong passion—and passion is such a rare thing in this calm, cold world, that we are drawn to her as to an affecting play.

Let us add, no one was disappointed. The high opinion they had formed of one who could thus win M. de Verteins, was surpassed by the reality. They had expected to see a beauty, as is found in Paris and elsewhere, in all societies in this zone. But no one conceived of such distinction, such refinement, such truly aristocratic elegance. The proudest among them was forced to recognise in Jeanne an equal.

Feelings express themselves in different ways, following the manners of the world they spring from. Elsewhere approbation would have been more significantly expressed. Here it was impossible—and here there was only a slight murmur, or rather a sweet rumor, softly shaded. Jeanne felt, nevertheless, that she was favorably received into this systematically exclusive society. She felt happy, less on her own account, than for his to whom belonged already her whole thoughts. She looked at him as if to say: "Art thou contented, master of my life? Do I satisfy your friends sufficiently? Do you feel a little proud of your wife?"

The marquis's face was beaming with such a deep, pure joy, he looked so much younger than usual, that Jeanne

felt happier than ever, when she saw how happy she made him. Here and there, she recognised in the crowd the astonished faces of her pupils, who had come to the ceremony to prove the rather condescending sympathy rich people usually feel for those less fortunate than themselves, and were now completely amazed at the display of wealth and brilliancy of this unexpected assembly. They could not hope for anything more themselves, and more than one would have envied her, if youth understood the feeling we know so well in later years.

Naturally pious—affected as women usually are under such circumstances—Jeanne sought strength in prayer. Raising her eyes in a few moments, she saw standing near, a dark pale face, looking at her with an expression that made her tremble. She thought she was mistaken, and she tried to turn away her looks and thoughts, but she felt attracted in spite of herself. For the second time she looked long and earnestly. She recognised the Count de Bois-Robert.

Was it the chance of an early morning's walk that brought him to the Rue de Clichy? Had he accidentally lounged into the open church? Not at all! A gossippy paper had informed him of Jeanne's intended marriage, and he rushed to taste in its greatest intensity the bitterness of his regrets. From the moment he saw the young girl, he never took his eyes off of her. A magnetic power stronger than his will riveted him to her. It was the counterpart of the other marriage, when he was at the altar with Mlle. Blanchelande, whilst Jeanne, forgotten, betrayed, fed on her heart, drank her tears; abandoned to all the anguish of despair, heard the fatal words that killed all her future happiness.

Now he was the one who loved, who lost the woman he adored. He had abandoned her to all the chances, trials and dangers of life. She had come out of them strong, serene, triumphant. He saw her now in the midst of the prestige of rank and fortune, surrounded with a brightness that heightened all her natural charms. The joy on her countenance, the maidenly blushes on her face, the brightness of her eyes, were occasioned by her love for another—for another to whom she would be all she might have been for him—the strength, sweetness, joy of his life. Had he not been her first love? If he had lost her, was it not his own fault? Had he not himself thrown her, as it were, into M. de Verteins' arms? At thinking thus, a jealous bitterness sprang up in his heart, and he leaned his forehead on his hands as if he feared it would burst.

Jeanne's soul was too compassionate not to sympathize with his feelings. She had too cruelly experienced them not to pity the one who felt them in his turn, and at the moment when she was filled with her own happiness, she prayed fervently that Heaven would cure in the heart of the young man the wound she herself had caused.

But, her thoughts soon returning to the one to whom she now entirely belonged, she thought only of her gratitude, her love, her adoration.

As the marquis, happy and proud, was helping her into his carriage, her dress brushed a gentleman who had not time to move out of her way to let her pass.

It was M. de Blanchelande, whom she had never thought of since the violent scene so fortunately interrupted by the arrival of M. de Verteins. The baron, after his discomfiture, had not dared to present himself at Mlle. Derville's house. But, governed by a passion which engrossed his life, he had not ceased to roam around the house. No one will be surprised that he had not needed the present of Artaxerxes to purchase the conscience of the porter Gabriel, through whom he learnt of the approaching marriage of the young girl. A feeling of shame that he could not conquer, prevented him from entering the church during the ceremony, but he could not resist the desire to see Jeanne for the last time, and his heart beat like a young college boy's as he waited for her coming.

The new marquise passed by him proud, magnificent, not deigning to honor him even by a look.

All the equipages disappeared, one after another, and the baron, with haggard look, remained rooted to the spot, still waiting for the one who would return no more.

At the moment when he had recovered himself and was going away, the Count de Bois-Robert appeared alone on the threshold of the church door.

The father-in-law and son-in-law gave each other a look which penetrated into each other's soul, and without a word walked away together.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AN hour later, Jeanne having changed her wedding dress for her travelling attire, and her veil and orange blossoms for a little round hat with a waving feather, the express train bore the young couple to that beloved Normandy, which was so dear to Jeanne's memory. A coupé, secured in advance by the marquis, permitted the happy couple to enjoy the pleasures of a tête-à-tête. M. de Verteins did not wish his pleasure to be frightened away by the mixture in a common car.

"My dear lord, will you please tell me, now, where we are going?" asked Jeanne, when Paris was left behind and they were in the open country; "you must do me this justice, that I have followed blindly, without knowing where you are leading me."

"As a woman ought to follow her husband! The mayor, according to his office duties, has just told you this. But be comforted, my dear angel, and rest in me. I will only lead you where you desire."

"That will not be a very difficult thing to do—all places are alike with you."

"Well, since I must tell you—we are going to Avranches."

"To Avranches?" replied Jeanne, with joyous surprise; "I am delighted—but what are we going there for?"

"For nothing that we could not get elsewhere. At this moment all earth is indifferent to me—I live in heaven. But I know that Avranches is your native place, and that you have an especial regard for it, and have held it in sweet and pious remembrance. This is why I am taking you there."

"How I thank you for understanding me so well!"

A post-chaise was waiting for them at Carentan station, and leaving the railroad they drove for half a day through one of the most beautiful countries in the world, and entered triumphantly into the court of the best hotel at Avranches. The first person who met them was the honorable master Gravis, a little larger, stouter, and more gray than when Mlle. Derville was last here. Notified by a dispatch, the honest notary was prepared. He saluted the marquis, hat in hand, with all the demonstrations of respect and reverence of a bailiff of the ancient regime, welcoming his lord among his vassals.

M. de Verteins, who knew life too well to show the least particle of aristocratic pride, shook him cordially by the hand, and moved aside to let him see Jeanne.

"My wife, dear M. Gravis."

"Madame La Marquise, your humble servant," replied the notary without ever raising his head.

"Good-morning, dear sir, I am delighted to see you," replied the young lady with her beautiful harmonious voice.

Gravis raised himself so quickly at this that his spectacles were in great danger. He looked twice at Jeanne as if he scarcely recognised her, and in a barely intelligible voice, he stammered:

"Madame—Mademoiselle — Madame la Marquise—Mademoiselle Jeanne—"

"Madame la Marquise de Verteins," said Pierre, smiling.

"I know," he continued, "that you are old friends. My wife"—how it pleased him to say this new word *My Wife!*—"my wife has told me of all her former obligations to you, and we have now come to thank you."

These words, so clear and precise, could not recall the notary from his first shock, to the reality of things. He did not understand what he saw. Jeanne Derville, the poor orphan, the daily governess, whose only fortune was the Rosery, become suddenly rich, titled, a great lady, passed his wildest imagination. The good man did not know where he was.

However, the facts were before him, the evidence could not be denied. Jeanne herself, standing before the notary, gave to the act a character of authenticity that a notary could not doubt. He must acknowledge the daughter of the colonel was a real marchioness. Gravis, on hearing of the marriage, had never suspected the real state of the case. Such a union was equal to the ending of a tale of the Arabian

Thousand-and-One Nights, and it was difficult for him to recover from his surprise. It requires more than human perfection to rejoice at the happiness of a woman one loves, when that happiness is caused by another. Gravis was much annoyed, but he ended by conquering himself, and addressing these improvised words to Jeanne with perfect sincerity:

"Believe, Madame la Marquise, that no person can be more rejoiced at your happiness than I am, for no one knows so well how much you deserve it."

"I have never doubted your goodness nor your interest in me," said Jeanne, pressing his hand.

"Monsieur le Marquis," said the notary, in a low tone, "your orders have been carried out, the papers are in my study."

"Oh! I do not want papers, only give me the keys."

"This is the way a lover speaks, but not a notary. If I had not the papers, you could not have the keys, Monsieur le Marquis. He! he! Business is business, as I always told the poor colonel, the father of Madame la Marquise."

"Is it far from the village?"

"About twelve miles; there is a sign-post on the road. The gate of the park is five minutes further on. I have a 'Percheron' in my stable that Mlle. Jeanne—pardon me, that Madame la Marquise knows very well. The gray is not young, but if you will allow, he will take you there in three-quarters of an hour."

Gravis had doubtlessly supposed his offer would be accepted, for while they were still talking, his carriage drove up to the door of the hotel.

"Here is my 'demi-fortune,'" said he, showing a carriage much in vogue twenty years ago among the small property owners, and "here," added he, "is also my daughter."

"An entire fortune!" replied the marquis maliciously, alluding to the dress laden with ornaments of the enraged provincial.

Rose Desirée, armed with her substitute, was really entering the hotel court, desiring to see with her own eyes the marquis; her father's mouth had been so full for eight days, to use her own expression more expressive than elegant. Marriage had not improved Rose Desirée; it had not softened her. She was always the disagreeable person, dry, thin, angular, that we have met in this tale. She did not at first recognise Jeanne, who was standing with her back turned, but she could not help an envying admiration of the beautiful aristocratic elegance of the travelling dress, so perfect in its whole harmony of detail.

Rose was still examining her when Jeanne, turning suddenly, showed her face glowing with youth and happiness. The two ladies recognised each other. Rose saluted her with a constrained manner, compressing her thin lips, and drawing her eyes down obliquely like a cat.

Jeanne had not forgotten the malevolence of the notary's daughter. But she was like the king of France; she would not revenge the injuries done to the dauphin, and her good nature prompted her to forget them. This was all Rose Desirée, if she did justice to the herself, could hope to obtain.

They set out.

Jeanne made the notary sit by her side, and her husband opposite; Jacqueline was hoisted alongside of the coachman. They took the route to the Rosery.

Jeanne gave her husband a touching look, full of questions she dared not ask. The coachman's whip gave wings to the Percheron. The carriage flew. They soon reached the gate of the cottage.

"It is here, then, we are to pass our few holidays," said Jeanne to M. de Verteins.

"I wished to do so, dear child; but M. Gravis, who knows the laws better than you or I, will tell you that when one has a good or a bad tenant, it is impossible to take his house from him even for a day before his term has expired; only as I know your filial piety, and how you have cultivated your affection for those who are no more, I have wished that in your first halt in life's journey we might make a pilgrimage together to their graves."

"How good you are!" said Jeanne, in a low tone. "And how I love you!" added she, still lower, pressing his hand.

The carriage stopped. The captain was at the gate as the time before—a little older, but eager and polite.

He welcomed the young couple in

strong terms, and all went into the garden.

Jeanne took the arm of M. de Verteins.

"Although it is only in passing, and for an hour, still you cannot tell how glad I am to welcome you in my house," said she, to M. de Verteins.

"Would I could do so in my turn!"

"What difference is it?" said she, with charming cajolery. "What belongs to one does it not belong to the other when they love?"

"You never said anything truer than that!"

"My friend, before showing you the little abode where we will some day repose, permit me to show you above, alongside of the church."

"It is for that purpose I have brought you here."

They were on the path to the churchyard, when the captain silently handed her a large bunch of roses.

"Thanks," said she; "you also have understood my wishes."

They went slowly towards the field of eternal repose. She went first, he followed at some distance; neither spoke.

Jeanne refound the tombs where, three years before, broken down with sorrow, in the bitterness of unmerited desertion, given up to all anguish, fleeing from the past, doubtful of the future, she had knelt to pray; she returned there now, after gaining the battle of life.

Alone! thanks to her own energy, to her own courage, to her own perseverance, she had marked out her own path, and gained her position without losing the respect of herself nor the esteem of others. She might not be at the end of her trials, but, leaning on the arm of the man she loved, sustained by him, she could fear nothing — truly nothing. Therefore, in the midst of these sorrowful recollections, filled with eternal regrets that she felt for these dear souls, a sweet peace glided imperceptibly into her soul.

At the moment when she, in her turn, was becoming the head of a new family, she felt that death is not an eternal separation, that its dark limits end here below, and that it is not a *Farewell for ever!* but *We meet again!* that the loved lips ought to say to those they leave. From those dear beings who slept alongside of each other, united in death as in life, after having rejoiced in their love, she asked permission to be happy in her turn with the one they would doubtless have chosen for her. She prayed in a low tone for a few moments, but with a burst of fervor that carries the soul to heaven; then she laid the roses on the tombs, and turned to her husband, who stood some distance away.

"Now," said she, throwing herself on his breast, "I am wholly thine. Lead me where you desire. I will follow blindly—in this life and in the next!"

M. de Verteins dried a tear that rolled on his manly face. Half an hour afterwards the notary's carriage, drawn by the gray, entered the court of a pretty little chateau, where all the population seemed united in their honor, having been prepared by Gravis.

Nothing was wanting, neither the firing of the local artillery—represented by three guns—nor the huge bouquets, ornamented with symbolic favors; nor the traditional discourse written by the magistrate of the village, and recited by a young girl in a white dress. One could believe they were in the days of the good old times.

"What does all this mean?" asked Jeanne of M. de Verteins. "I do not know what has happened; it seems that for the last two days I have become the heroine of a fairy tale."

"What difference is that? If the tale pleases thee, it is easy to turn it into reality."

"But where am I then?"

"At my house—no, at our house, dear little one."

"How, is this chateau yours?"

"Certainly, I have bought it to pass our honeymoon here."

"Indeed! then you are not poor?"

"Not absolutely!"

"Then, sir, you have deceived me," said she, with an accent of sweet reproach.

"This is the only time."

"Explain why all this mystery."

"Jeanne, dear Jeanne, will you make a little allowance for me?"

"A great deal, especially if you do not need it."

"Well, know then, I wished to be loved for myself alone—a beautiful

dream, is it not, dear soul? In a life already long, I have seen interest so often govern the actions of human beings, that I have conceived a distaste for my equals that had rendered me misanthropic. I would have believed myself the most miserable of men if I could have suspected that such a motive could influence the woman who was to be my wife. I therefore led those around me to believe that I had swallowed up the patrimony left to my youth. I have stated, and every one has believed, that I was now obliged to work for my bread. From that time the eager attentions I had received diminished. My love for men and even for women was not increased by this. Now I was in my second youth, the time when all illusions vanish. I said farewell to my hopes, and resolved to live alone. I met you, Jeanne, and all my resolutions vanished. To be loved by you, to be loved for myself alone, was a desire that filled all my being with violent intensity. My emotions resembled those of the player, who risks his all on one card. I wished with you to gain all or lose all. It seemed to me that if I was fortunate enough to induce you to accept the affections of a poor man—to enter into his life of work and privations—the advantages I owe to chance would aid me to pay my debt of gratitude, and to repair the wrongs a cruel destiny has so long shown you. Now thou knowest all, my beloved Jeanne. Will you pardon me?"

"They pardon culprits, and you are the best of men. It is I now who must ask if the loving heart of a woman, and the devotion of her life, can repay you for what you have done for me."

The firing of muskets, and the repeated cries of "Long live Madame la Marquise!" prevented Jeanne from hearing her husband's reply; but he pressed her hand so tenderly, that the gesture took the place of words.

THE END.

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